

From Malvern to the Irish Sea: Early Bronze Age round barrows in a border landscape

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Abstract

This thesis explores Early Bronze Age round barrows in a distinctive landscape, the Anglo-Welsh borderland. It is a landscape of contrasts, encompassing the lowlands and plains of the Midlands counties to the east and the uplands of the west. Although the region has been recognised as a valid unit of study, many previous studies have been constrained by national and county boundaries. Recent research on the prehistoric archaeology of the region has addressed this problem but until now the area's round barrows have received little attention. This thesis serves to redress this imbalance and considers round barrows in their historic and regional context.

A multi-scalar approach to the study has been taken. At the macro scale, the morphology, distribution and broad topographic settings are examined in addition to an analysis of factors relating to the survival and destruction of the regions barrows. It is argued that the location of the borderlands may have led to some of the distinct architectural elements present in the region.

For the most part, round barrows in the study area do not coalesce into large cemeteries as seen elsewhere; the general pattern being that of isolated or paired barrows, yet relatively dense clusters have been identified. These are analysed at the meso scale to establish the relationships of barrows within these clusters to each other, to earlier monumentality and to the wider landscape. Here it is suggested that different rationales led to their formation, in some instances representing different communities' access to resources and routeways.

The analysis then proceeds at the micro-scale and considers the problem of why build a round barrow in the first place. By examining a single, well excavated site of two barrows in close proximity with a reasonable degree of contemporaneity, it is possible to mitigate against certain variables to explore the role of choice when a community built a barrow. The role of deposition, including that of human remains is considered and it is argued that such practices were strategies to effect change within the world of the living.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

Many studies of prehistoric monuments are confined or restrained by modern administrative boundaries. By contrast, this study is an investigation of Early Bronze Age round barrow/cairn construction in a topographically diverse area that straddles county and national boundaries, broadly correlating to the central and northern Anglo-Welsh border. To the east are the lowlands and basins of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Cheshire. To the west the land rises, forming the significant uplands of the Shropshire and Clwydian Hills and the Berwyn Mountains. The distribution and densities of barrows within this region is varied, and provides an opportunity to study Early Bronze Age monuments, variously described as funerary or ceremonial in character, across diverse landscapes, unencumbered by the artificial boundaries unknown to the inhabitants of the time. Recently, researchers have begun to recognise the Anglo-Welsh borderland in prehistory as a valid area for study (Halstead 2005; Mullin 2011, 2012), highlighting its distinctive topographic and archaeological signature, yet round barrows have received little or no attention, an imbalance this study will address. In so doing it will seek to explain the rationale behind the placement of some round barrows, in particular addressing the nature of clustering and the role of choice in materials and architecture. The remainder of the introduction will detail the structure of the thesis before examining the rationale for the choice of study area and the methodology employed.

Chapter 2: The historical context of round barrows in the borderland is considered by an examination of the evidence for non-funerary related activities. It includes a detailed critical analysis of the role of settlement.

Chapter 3: The foundation for the research details the construction of the database from existing records. From this the form, distribution and densities of round barrows are examined along with an analysis of the survival and destruction of the monuments.

Chapter 4: This chapter comprises the results of fieldwork conducted at round barrow clusters identified from the database and an appraisal of their nature. The role of

topography and visibility is critically examined to determine if such aspects structured their placement.

Chapter 5: An analysis of a pair of well-excavated round barrows detailing the depositional and structural practices encountered. It examines the role of human remains and places this into a wider context to demonstrate the role of choice in round barrow construction.

Chapter 6: The final chapter discusses the themes and issues raised in the preceding chapters. The evidence for structuring principles is examined with regard to earlier monumentality and topography. The discussion analyses the role that round barrows played in the landscape and how that landscape's monuments may have been perceived.

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1.2 Rationale for the study area

Round barrows are near ubiquitous in Britain, but regional scale studies do not reflect this distribution, instead often favouring those areas which have been subject to extensive antiquarian intervention (Fleming 1971; Barnatt & Collis 1996; Woodward & Woodward 1996; Exon et al. 2000; Peters 2000; Thomas 2005; Fowler 2013). Where studies have been conducted away from these areas they are often restricted, whether by expedient choice such as modern political boundaries (Mullin 2003; Jones 2005), or some other consideration such as topographic conformity (Lewis 2007; Lewis & Mullin 2012). Rarely do studies examine the interface between topographic zones and consider the effect such phenomena may have on prehistoric populations.

The study area itself, like all such boundaries, is an arbitrary construct mediated by certain factors (Fig 1). Its borders are for the most part dictated by rivers and streams, but devised so as to provide an approximately equal division between English and Welsh counties. It encompasses parts of the counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire in England and the modern Welsh principal areas of

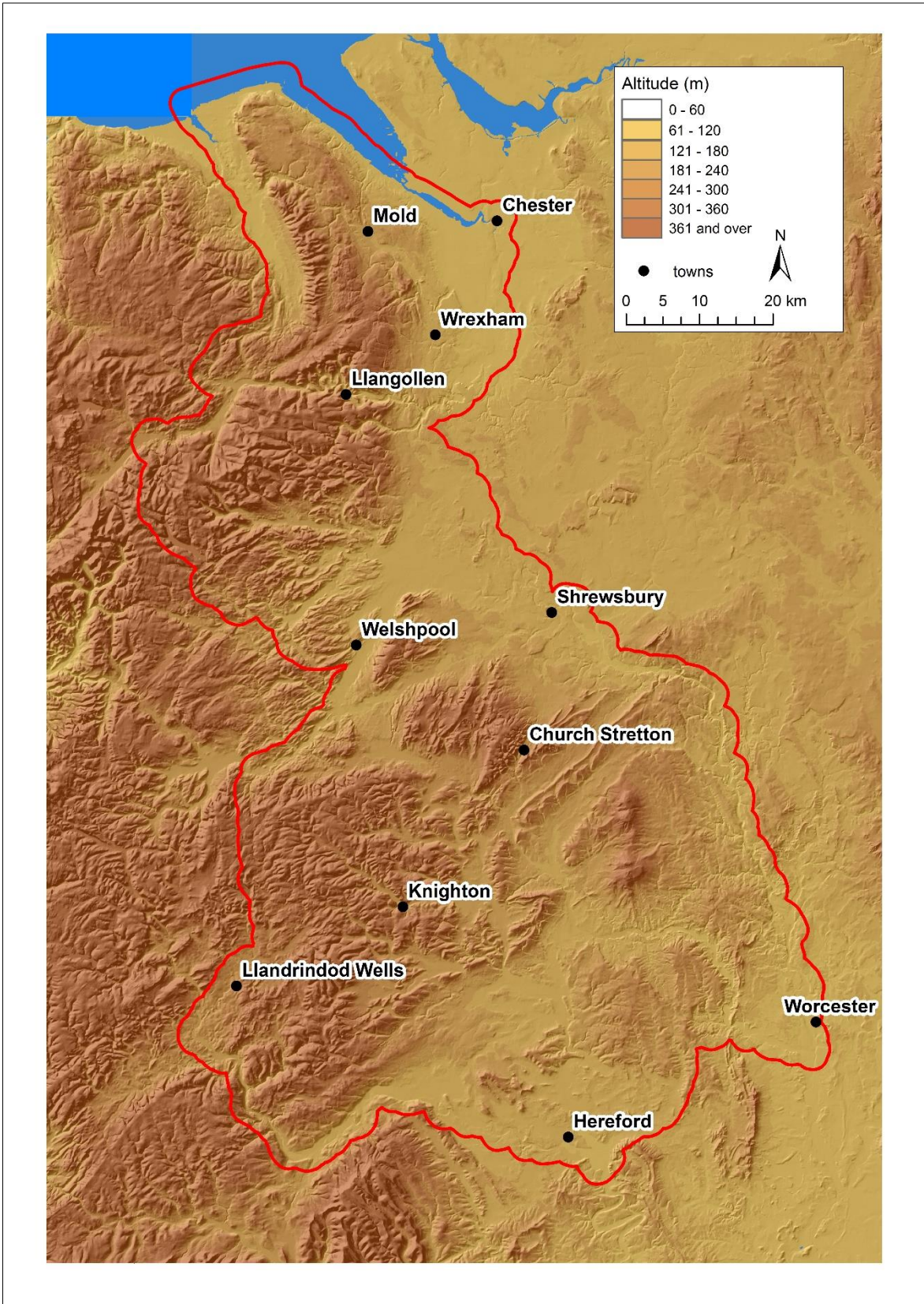


Figure 1: Study area

Powys, Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Gwynedd and Conwy. Much of the Welsh literature often refers to the counties as they were constituted before the Local Government Act 1972. The counties of Brecknockshire, Radnorshire, and Montgomeryshire are subsumed within Powys. The portion of Merionethshire that falls under the scope of this study is today part of Gwynedd and Denbighshire.

Much of the earlier regional scale work on round barrows in the counties encompassed by the study area has consisted of cataloguing, with a focus on morphology, relative dimensions and topographic location (Roese 1982; Dunn 1988; Watson 1991; Grinsell 1993). Recent re-assessment of the records of monuments in Wales by Clwyd–Powys Archaeological Trust has resulted in comprehensive distribution data for the western section of the study area (Gibson 2002; Lynch 2002, 2003; Jones 2004) although these surveys provide little interpretation; rather they are seen as an aid to further research (Lynch 2002, 15). The most recent interpretative account is by Garwood (2007b) who has recently synthesized current knowledge for the monuments of the English border counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire.

Wales is perhaps better known for its Neolithic megalithic tradition and rather less so for its Bronze Age monuments. The work of Lynch, and latterly Tilley and Cummings has ensured that Welsh Neolithic monumentality has been considered beyond the confines of the principality. When compared against the scale and complexity (and perhaps accessibility) of the Wessex Bronze Age barrow cemeteries and their history of excavation, it is perhaps easy to understand why the isolated hilltop cairns, or low standing stones barely visible above the heather, have not elicited the same level of enthusiasm from researchers. This rather misses the point though and it will be apparent that the region has a large and rich record of Early Bronze Age monumentality which is only now beginning to be corrected (Garwood 2011).

1.3 Methodology

In order to identify and understand the principles and motivations behind the placement of round barrows in the borderland, the study is conducted at three scales of analysis, the macro, meso and micro scale. The rationale for this approach is detailed below in the wider context of round barrow studies and is further elucidated within the relevant chapters.

The recent regional research framework projects in England and Wales have identified certain research priorities (Hughes 2004). These include the need for large-scale spatial surveys of monuments in neglected areas and the development of interpretative frameworks to account for patterning. Of particular relevance is the need to develop models that analyse the relationship between different monuments and between monuments and the wider landscape. In addition, examination of the immediate environs may provide theories about the development, role and use of monuments. For the West Midlands at least, it is considered that 'sites are sufficiently numerous and well-preserved to encourage detailed landscape studies of monuments and funerary practices using terrain modelling and spatial/visual analytical methods' (Garwood 2007b, 155). Of particular relevance is the understanding that architectural forms, funerary practices and the spatial organization of barrow groups and their landscape settings are research priorities for this region.

1.4 Round barrows in the landscape - towards a multi-scalar approach

Round barrows are visible remains of practices of some of the inhabitants of Early Bronze Age Britain (c.2300-1500 BC). Initially considered to be the manifestation of a new rite of individual burial introduced to Britain by a distinct immigrant "Beaker people" (Grimes 1951, 51), examples from the Neolithic may instead point to insular origins (Kinnes 1979; 2004; Gibson 2007). Their significance to Bronze Age studies is apparent when it is considered that barrows and their contents have provided the dominant source of data for most interpretations of the social life of this period (Bradley 1984,70; 1994) It is however recognized that a reliance on a small selection of exceptional artefacts from barrows in a limited geographical area has provided a misleading impression of the Early Bronze Age (Bradley 2007, 153-5).

Barrows constitute a class of monument comprising a mound constructed of earth, turves, stone, or a combination of these materials, but the term cairn is preferred for barrows that are predominately constructed from stone (Grinsell 1990). Often, these mounds and cairns were raised to cover or contain inhumations, cremated remains or a combination of both, although examples of barrows without interments are known (Fox 1959, 148; Lynch 1993, 41-6). The external form of round barrows may display some variance and typologies have been constructed detailing the different forms

(Grinsell 1953; Ashbee 1960). This diversity of earthen mound is most apparent in southern-central England (Ashbee 1960, 24) but occasional outliers are postulated further afield, including examples from within the study area (Dinn *et al* 2004). Stone variants such as cairn circles, ring-cairns and other related monuments can be found in the uplands of the Highland Zone of Britain (Ritchie and MacLaren 1972; Lynch 1973; Jones 2005) and are well documented for the western Anglo-Welsh border region (Gibson 2002; Lynch 2002; 2003).

The form of the barrow that is visible today is typically the last stage in a sequence of events at a complex monument and in many cases will have little to do with the initial deposit. Excavation may reveal other structures beneath the final mound, such as stake circles or evidence of barrow aggrandisement (Fox 1941). The raising of the final mound does not necessarily signify the end of activities at barrows, later internments, or 'secondary burials', may still be inserted. During the early centuries of the second millennium BC these were typically urned cremation burials (Barrett 1990), but later deposits such as Roman and Iron Age pottery have been identified in barrows such as those excavated at Cossington in Leicestershire (Thomas 2008). The re-use of Bronze Age barrows as burial monuments during the Anglo-Saxon period is also widely attested (Williams 1997). Not all barrows survive as upstanding monuments. Ring ditches, identified by aerial photography as crop or soil marks, often represent the ploughed out remains of barrows (Warrilow *et al* 1986; Barclay and Halpin 1999) but unless confirmed by excavation caution should be applied to their attribution as Bronze Age (Wilson 2000, 104-15).

Garwood (2007b) has posited a chronological framework for southern British Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age funerary architecture and burial traditions which is summarised here. The centuries around c.2500-2150 BC are dominated by small mounds built in a single phase covering central, single inhumations although some burial sequences may occur in the grave pit or cist. Ceramic grave goods where present are represented by Beakers in the earlier centuries and Food Vessels towards the end of this early period. The following three centuries, c.2150-1850 BC, bear witness to the largest diversity of traditions. Barrow form becomes more diverse, mounds may be enlarged and timber stake or post settings become common. Single inhumations in central and peripheral positions still proliferate but there are also multiple burials at many barrows. Beakers and Food Vessels dominate but there is an increase in cremations and these are frequently accompanied by Collared Urns. The

latter part of the Early Bronze Age, c.1850-1500 BC, sees cremation as the predominant funerary rite, the remains frequently accompanied by any of the ceramic traditions in use - Collared and Cordoned Urns and Food Vessels. Within Wessex the tradition of 'rich' graves arises. These are single phase mounds with new external forms and large and complex accompanying assemblages but mound enlargement and elaboration becomes rare. It is also during this later period that the spatial organisation of barrow cemeteries in some areas changes from dispersed clusters to more nucleated and linear arrangements.

Although there is some disparity with regard to relative densities, the distribution of round barrows is near ubiquitous for Britain, (Atkinson 1972). Despite this, the historiography of barrow research has been chiefly concerned with those areas of England which display a long history of barrow excavation and fieldwork (Grinsell 1953; 1990; Ashbee 1960; Marsden 1999; Woodward 2000). Whilst Roese (1986; 1987) has investigated the history for Wales, there has been little synthetic consideration of barrow research for the northern and central English border counties.

Early excavations and accounts focused upon barrows as graves, monuments related primarily to the rite of burial (for an overview, see Woodward 2000). Yet this view is limited, especially when the complex chronologies and sequences of activities and other events are considered. At Raunds, Northamptonshire for example (Harding and Healy 2007), two morphologically similar barrows separated by 280m exhibit very different characteristics. Barrow 3 was preceded by stake circles and had no primary burial, whilst Barrow 9 had no pre-mound structures but covered a central primary inhumation in a large wooden chamber. Clearly, round barrows were not solely constructed to receive the honoured dead.

Recent theoretical approaches shift the focus to a consideration of barrows as significant places, where the living renegotiate the social order. The removal of previous burials and the careful placement of new burials at some barrows all contribute to what Barrett (1990, 183) terms the 'topography of the dead'. This reordering of burials establishes identification, or contrast, with previous interments and serves to reinforce genealogical status. To this end, the barrow and barrow burial is more concerned with the living than the dead. Thomas (1991) agrees, his reading of Beaker burials suggests that accompanying objects, traditionally seen as prestige items and evidence for social stratification had little intrinsic value. Rather, their

importance lay within the connotations they brought to the context of burial, the fixing of the deceased identity in the minds of the mourners. More recent studies have developed these themes of identity, memory and personhood (Brück 2004; 2006; Jones 2008). Brück (2004) argues that the relationship between people, places and things that are manifested at barrows serves to reinforce the relational character of identity in the Bronze Age. Similarly the lower status of women as determined by the choice of mortuary rites and apparent gender differences within those rites has been challenged through a reconsideration of the evidence from barrows (Brück 2009).

These studies of barrows operate at the micro level, focusing the attention in towards the barrow. Whilst crucial to an understanding of the mortuary rites of the Bronze Age, many studies of this scale rarely consider the barrow in a wider context. Woodward (2000) has suggested that rather than viewing barrows solely as graves, it may be more appropriate to see them as monuments, artificial mounds located in a natural and humanly modified landscape. To this end it is necessary to approach barrows at the macro scale also, to examine the topographic and spatial relationships of barrows relative to one another, to other monuments and to the wider landscape.

Perhaps the earliest such study was conducted by Fleming (1971) who attempted to show how the distribution, relative densities and topographic situation of barrows in Wessex could indicate areas of economic activity, in this case transhumant pastoralist subsistence. The preference for different barrow forms and the distribution densities of barrows and barrow cemeteries are seen as reflecting different tribal or social groups, whilst the relatively even spacing of the cemeteries serves to define those territories. The continuing near invisibility of Early Bronze Age settlement in many parts of Britain has led to further topographic studies utilising barrows as proxies for settlement. Green (1974) incorporates the skeletal and artefactual evidence to argue for barrows in areas of pastoralist 'home bases'. Tomalin (1993) suggests that the largest barrow cemeteries on the Isle of Wight were located where pastoral interests were best served, namely above the spring served coombes of the chalk which provided plentiful water and open grassland for grazing. Similarly, the ring ditches of the Upper Severn and its tributary the Tern are perceived to demarcate territories (Watson 1991).

Dissimilarities in practice at topographically distinct round barrows have been noted in North Yorkshire (Simmons *et al* 1993). Here it is suggested that the barrows are

broadly divided between those situated in areas of settlement, as defined by contemporary artefact distributions, and those in conspicuous lines along the crests of watersheds with no associated settlement. From the 210 excavated barrows 175 produced evidence of a Bronze Age origin, primarily ceramic, but also a small number of daggers and battle axes. An examination of the artefactual and topographic evidence revealed some patterns. Food vessels accompany twice as many cremation burials as inhumations and are generally situated on the lower ground, peripheral to the sandstone moorlands. All but two Collared Urn burials are cremation burials and can be found in the same areas as the Food Vessel barrows but significantly they are also the only pottery type found in the barrows on the watersheds. It seems that the builders of the watershed barrows selected only one of the available rituals - that of urned burial - and the authors believe that it is not a factor of ceramic chronology.

The relationship between certain topographic positions and artefact types has also been noted in the Stonehenge landscape (Peters 2000). Here a distinction has been made on the basis of barrow form, size, altitude and location (watershed or hill spur) and their relative conspicuity within the landscape. The conspicuous barrows contain exotic grave goods and are interpreted as the burial places of a population drawn from a wider geographic area. In contrast, the inconspicuous barrows are associated with ceramic grave goods and are considered to have been built by local people.

The studies discussed above have sought to explain distributions of barrows primarily in socio-economic terms. Barrows are located within, or in some undefined fashion represent tribal or social territories. Fleming argues that barrows are placed in marginal areas so as not to encroach upon valuable arable land, yet the evidence from other regions such as Yorkshire and Cheshire suggests this may not always be the case. Indeed, Mullin (2003, 12-13) has criticised the simplistic mapping of barrow distributions onto modern soil maps, arguing that the nature of the majority of prehistoric soils is unknown. There is also little detailed discussion in the majority of studies of the precise relationships of the barrows with topographic features or other monuments. This area of research has been studied in depth for the Neolithic period (see for example: Tilley 1994; Bradley 1998; Cummings 2004; Lewis 2005; Loveday 2006) but the Bronze Age has received far less attention, perhaps indicative of the relative popularity of the two periods (Brück 2008, 23).

Those detailed barrow studies that have incorporated more nuanced considerations of landscape and monumentality are often restricted to the south. Woodward and Woodward (1996) for example have suggested that the distribution of barrows around the major monument complexes of Wessex (South Dorset Ridgeway, Avebury and Stonehenge) was subject to regional characteristics, particularly with regard to the local topography, but were all also governed by an underlying structural principle of circularity. The curved settings and arcs of barrow cemeteries reflect the circularity of the barrows, stake and post circles that sometimes lie beneath them and the monument complexes they reference. The lines and arcs may facilitate movement, linking barrows perhaps as staging posts upon which rites are performed, the paths weaving around a landscape that provides visual cues. Visibility, intervisibility and non-visibility become important. Watson (2001) agrees that the pattern of barrows in certain areas is influenced by routes of movement. The barrows are sometimes placed to be skyline from outside of the monumental areas, becoming highly visible markers on the approaches to these locations. But, rather than defining them, the barrows overlook routes towards significant monumental foci. Within the monumental areas the relationship changes. Here, Watson argues that the barrows are placed so that they are conspicuous to observers looking out from the henges. At Avebury for example he suggests that the barrows were deliberately placed for visual cues on horizons and defined a circular landscape.

Like Woodward and Watson, Field (1998) acknowledges a geometric and cosmological principle to barrow patterning. He invokes the principles of geomancy and feng shui to demonstrate how barrows may be situated harmoniously within the landscape. Careful placement with respect to existing burial sites is necessary, as is the position in relation to other landscape features such as lakes and rivers. The placement of barrows at geomorphological boundary zones such as that of soil, geology and topography may reflect economic concerns, but may also serve to emphasize symbolic boundaries. Both sides of the boundary have to operate in harmony and the placement of barrows at these points may play some part in facilitating this.

Again it is apparent from the larger scale studies discussed here that a level of detail is missing. Operating at the macro scale invariably neglects the particular character of individual barrows and can result in a degree of homogeneity that is illusory. Garwood (2007a, 44) argues that studies of 'sacred landscapes' such as those discussed, 'treat

barrows as essentially unchanging forms that endured for up to a millennia'. Further, barrows should be understood within their historical context. The complex chronologies of architectural forms and funerary practices reflect different beliefs and rationales, both temporally and geographically (ibid. 48-9).

Introducing an edited volume 'Beyond the grave', Jonathan Last (2007) identifies a dichotomy in relation to recent interpretive studies of barrows, that of the micro or mortuary approach and the macro or landscape approach. The former is concerned with the nuanced and detailed analysis of burials, mortuary rites and grave goods whereas the latter is concerned with moving beyond the site and exploring the development of barrow cemeteries, relationships within and between cemeteries but also out to the wider landscape. Whilst recognising the validity of these approaches and the contributions made, Last considers there is something missing, an analysis of the mound itself. The mound, he argues, is rarely considered in the micro, or mortuary style of study apart from when it is considered as a passive space for further burials or as a typological exercise. In the landscape or macro approach, mounds are inevitably reduced to dots on distribution maps with their constituent parts rarely considered. Last suggests that we should think beyond the grave and argues for equal prominence to be given to the mound and other structures, to the creation of the mound(s) itself, and the histories tied up within the complex mounds as context for understanding graves as features in the landscape. This should be achieved not by de-emphasising the funerary deposits at round barrows but by considering all aspects equally and integrating them into the structural sequence. Whilst correct in calling for this omission to be rectified, the solution offered stops short of fully reconciling the two scales. The approach posited, although extending outside of the grave to the mound, only attempts to reconcile one aspect of the landscape approach, that of the relationship to the constituent materials within the near and wider landscape. It still focuses on the barrow as a site and does not fully consider the implications for the barrows place within the landscape and the relationships with each other and the wider topography. It is necessary to not only think 'beyond the grave' but also to think 'beyond the mound' and integrate these new approaches to barrows within studies of barrow landscapes. Such an approach, predating the publication, was undertaken by Jones (2005) who integrated a re-evaluation of antiquarian excavations of Cornish round barrows with detailed fieldwork. Little large scale research on round barrows in their landscapes has been undertaken since these publications although Fowler's (2013) recent in-depth study of Early Bronze

Age mortuary practices in the north-east of England considered the role of landscape and topography.

This study then is an attempt to reconcile the different approaches by utilizing a multi-scalar methodology. It examines the nature of the evidence for round barrows at a macro scale, by examining form, distribution and density across the region. It then moves to what may be termed the meso-scale, an in-depth analysis of selected clusters of round barrows to determine possible rationales behind such phenomena. Finally at the micro scale a single, well-excavated site is analysed to examine the role of round barrows and human remains in the world of the living. This multi-scalar approach, utilising non-intrusive field survey alongside the examination of data from excavations provides an interpretation of round barrows in a hitherto neglected landscape.

1.5 A chronological conundrum – the problem of terminology

It is generally acknowledged that the Early Bronze Age, (c.2300 -1500 cal BC) has more in common with the Late Neolithic (c. 3000-2300 cal BC) than it does with the Middle and Late Bronze Age (Burgess 1980a, 243; Bradley 2007, Ch.3). The problems of the Three Age system, terminological and otherwise, in defining periods of the prehistoric past, particularly in relation to the period under consideration, are well known. Contemporary elements become artificially separated, so for example major ceremonial monuments are seen as characteristically 'Neolithic', but the development of funerary monuments is regarded as an Early Bronze Age phenomenon (Bradley 2007, 89-91). Yet this system, variously refined, divided, sub divided and conflated into various 'early' 'middle' and 'lates', with the odd 'earlier' and 'later', has proved remarkably long lasting, despite attempts at abandonment (for example: Atkinson 1960; Burgess 1980a). Burgess (2001; 2004) later admitted his attempt at avoiding the Three Age system was cumbersome, and advocated a return to a nomenclature that included the Late Neolithic, Copper Age and Early Bronze Age. In parallel with the overarching technological divisions of stone, bronze and iron, a variety of independent chronologies and phases exist.

For the period covered by this study, schemes have been proposed for ceramics (Clarke 1970; Needham 2005), metalwork (Burgess 1980a; Needham *et al* 1997) and most recently funerary monuments (Garwood 2007). Needham's (1996) recent

synthesis of dating evidence for the British Bronze Age with revisions for southern Britain (Needham *et al* 2010), proposes a periodisation that defines “successive prevailing cultural characteristics” (Needham 1996, 123). This scheme has seen some acceptance within the literature, albeit often in conjunction with some variant of the Three Age system. A summary of this in relation to other schemes and chronologies is provided below (Fig 2). Whilst Needham’s scheme is useful, it is not without its problems of resolution and regionality. The paucity of good radiocarbon dates from the study area means the sequence is still largely biased towards the more extensively researched areas and sites of southern England.

The radiocarbon dates in this study have been calibrated using OxCal 4.1 at 95% probability.

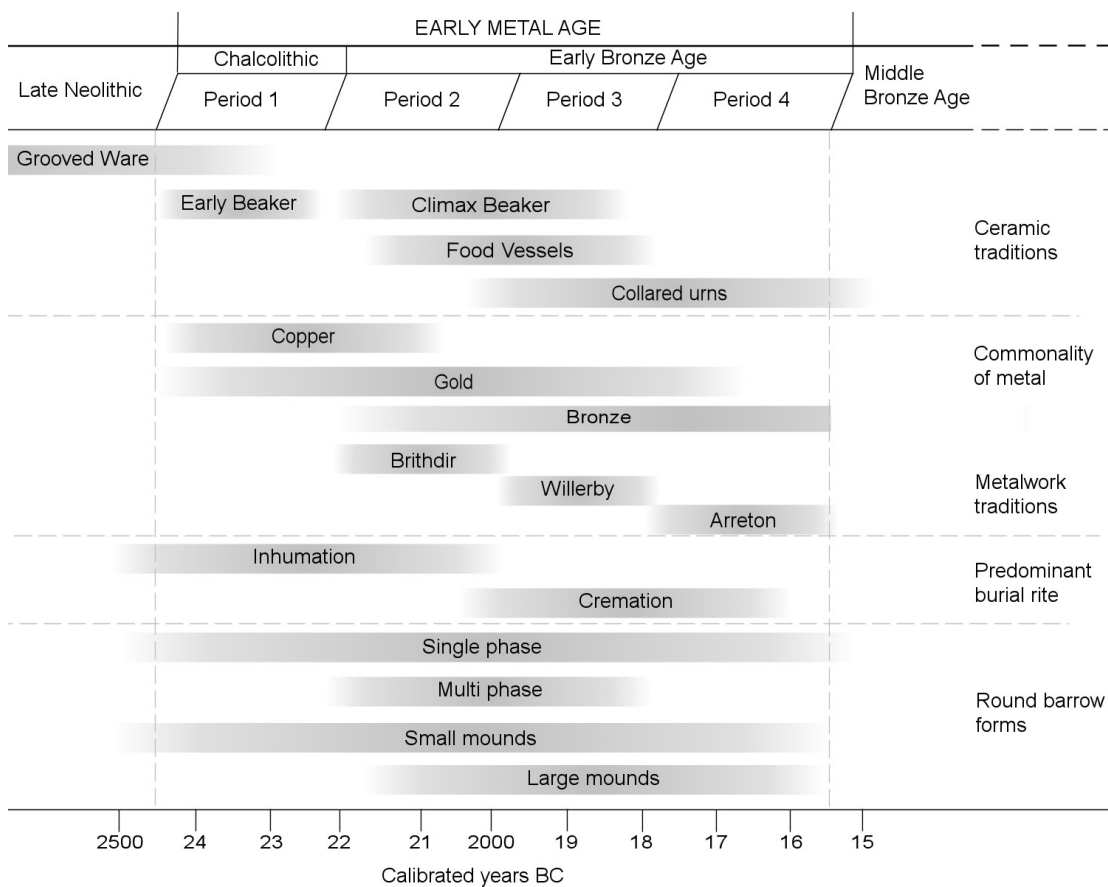


Figure 2 Outline chronology (based on Needham 1996, 2010; Garwood 2007)

Chapter 2: Beyond the barrow; the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age in the borderlands

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the nature and distribution of the evidence for territorial and social practices during the period c.3000-1500 cal BC. It is an unfortunate but acknowledged reality that much of the information about the social life of people during the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age comes from the remains of funerary practices, an historical imbalance that is in part a reflection of the paucity of evidence for permanent domestic structures and settlement. This chapter then is an attempt to see beyond the barrow, to the places people knew and utilised, the activities they undertook and the materials with which they engaged with their world. It is concerned with the evidence for the daily routines of life which are not part of the funerary record, although it is not implied that such a distinction was a reality during this period. It serves to situate the phenomena of barrow building into its historical context, one that was materially and conceptually different from what came before in the earlier Neolithic, and later during the Middle Bronze Age. By reviewing the evidence from occupation and activity sites, it has become apparent that some places could become meaningful in ways that resonated down through later centuries, such that they were incorporated into the process of building barrows.

The remainder of the chapter is divided into four sections, the first of which provides a brief introduction to the topics covered by this chapter. The second section provides an overview of the current state of knowledge on the non- funerary evidence for the borderlands. The third section is a detailed critical examination of the evidence for settlement and occupation activities before concluding in the fourth section with a summary of the evidence for traditions of daily life in the borderlands.

2.2 Continuity and change: an overview of the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age

The Late Neolithic signals a period during which populations expanded into previously underexploited landscapes including the uplands of the Anglo-Welsh border (Lynch 2000, 80). This spatial shift was accompanied by a mental shift, by novel ways of thinking about the world. Conceptions of time and space were made material and

expressed through a range of new ceremonial, ritual and burial monuments (Bradley 1998). Previously inhabited places were not abandoned though, landscapes cleared and utilised in the Early and Middle Neolithic continued to attract attention. Late Neolithic settlement and ceremonial activities in the upper Severn valley for example, took place in landscapes where long barrows and cursus monuments would have been visible, and perhaps provided the focus for the new monuments (Gibson 1994; 2000; 2002). By contrast henges, circles of timber and stone and round barrows were, in some places, the first of any type of structure to appear (Gibson 2002). In most regions of Britain this concern with durable and elaborate architecture for some aspects of life did not extend to the domestic sphere. Houses are rare during the Late Neolithic, more so in the Early Bronze Age (Darvill 1996) and in the borderlands appear to be ephemeral structures more suited to seasonal or short term occupation. The lack of substantial settlement architecture, along with little evidence for bounded fields and farmsteads has raised issues regarding the nature of settlement (Brück & Goodman 1999, 19), land tenure and territoriality (Johnston 2001; Kitchen 2001) and also of subsistence regimes (Moore-Colyer 1996). This in turn makes the notion of a fully sedentary agricultural population seem untenable, particularly for the Early Bronze Age. Rather it may be appropriate to consider a population practicing a form of residential mobility to be more likely (Brück 1999, 52).

Concomitant with developments in monumental architecture and their associated rituals and practices are changes in ceramic traditions and material culture. Impressed Wares, fully developed by c.3000 cal BC (Gibson and Kinnes 1997) were joined and gradually replaced by Grooved Ware from c.2900 cal BC (Garwood 1999) throughout Britain. The stable, flat based Grooved Ware marked the end of the round-based tradition of Neolithic pottery (Gibson 2002), but there is a degree of familiarity and continuity in the nature of its deposition if not always its location and purposes (Thomas 1999, 120). Both traditions can be found in pits for example, though rarely in the same context, and Grooved Ware is more likely to be associated with certain monument types and exotica such as stone axes and maceheads than the Impressed Wares (Edmonds 1995, 97). The continued concern with crafting fine pieces from stone demonstrated by such artefacts can be juxtaposed with a general downturn in the level of precision and care displayed in everyday flint tool production during this period. An apparently expedient approach to tool manufacture produced a wide range of larger, less portable and adaptable tools and this, in conjunction with an increase in

the size of flint scatters, has been used to argue for a decrease in the scale of routine movement compared to the Early Neolithic (Edmonds 1995, 80-2).

The introduction of Beakers from Europe around 2500-2400 cal BC (Needham 2005) is coeval with that of copper and gold metallurgy and the development of round barrows, although the notion of a fully formed European wide homogeneous 'Beaker package' is questionable (Thomas 1999, 122; Gibson 2007). This period, the Chalcolithic, was brief compared to Europe, lasting barely three hundred years, although Needham (1996, 123) considered the earliest centuries of the Early Bronze Age a 'metal using Neolithic'. The addition of tin to copper to produce bronze heralded the Bronze Age proper, a period that lasted for c.1500 years, but this technological development was not accompanied by the massive social and economic upheavals previously thought by scholars such as Childe (1930) until halfway through the period.

2.3 The borderlands and the Early Bronze Age: a review

Principal works that consider the borderland in prehistory in any detail have until recently been few. Indeed, Ray (2007, 51) has bemoaned the difficulty of summarising what is known about the Neolithic in the West Midlands through a review of pre-existing narratives, when essentially, none have been written. This statement could be applied equally to the Early Bronze Age. For the most part, prehistory is confined to a few pages in broad-based synthetic volumes (Millward 1978; Rowley 1986), a prelude to the real business of Offa's Dyke and the Norman Welsh Marches. A lengthier popular treatment for the Neolithic and Bronze Age in the Welsh Marches was provided by Stanford (1991), perhaps unsurprisingly as he lived and worked locally, excavating sites such as the barrow cemetery at Bromfield, Shropshire and the hillfort at Midsummer Hill, Herefordshire. The Iron Age fares better, no doubt due to the regions profusion of hillforts (Alcock 1965; Stanford 1972). The most recent work is the result of a doctoral thesis by Mullin (2012) who examined three classes of evidence; stone, metal and enclosures, to argue for a distinct signature to the prehistoric archaeology of the borderlands.

It is perhaps unsurprising that there has been little interest in the prehistory of the border. Much work nationally is carried out on the basis of modern, national, political and administrative boundaries (Taylor 1980; Evans 2008), areas of topographical homogeneity (Browne & Hughes 2003, 20), or perceived historical cultural territories

(Piggott 1938). The borderlands, whilst recognised as a historic political and geographical entity, the Welsh Marches (Lieberman 2008), do not easily slot into any of the standard categories for prehistorians. Whilst the above may go some way to explaining this lack of enquiry, a glance at the early distribution maps of Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary monuments in Britain provides another possibility. The dense concentrations of Early Neolithic chambered cairns, dolmens and long barrows around the Irish Sea Zone, Wessex, the Cotswolds and South-East Wales stand in stark contrast to the apparent complete absence of extant monuments in the Midlands and east Wales (Fox 1959, 12). This absence of monuments, until comparatively recently considered an integral component of the Neolithic 'package,' led Sir Cyril Fox (1959) to conclude that the area was sparsely utilised, little more than an obstacle to be negotiated on the routes between Wales, Ireland and the lowlands of England. Fox's geomorphological and environmentally deterministic model explained the distribution of monuments, and by implication occupation and settlement, by the need for early farming migrants to have access to good, pervious soils to cultivate. Hence the megalithic cultures of the Atlantic seaboard colonised the coastal sea plains and foothills of Wales but for the most part avoided the inland upland plateau, although by his own admission Fox's model could not account for the monuments of the Black Mountains of South Wales (*ibid.*32). Expansion from the south of Britain was hampered not only by the terrain, where one has to negotiate the 'grain' of the country, the south west – north eastern trending uplands, but also by the 'damp oak woodlands' of the Midlands Gap. Characterised by water holding, clay soils and thick deposits of glacial drift, this lowland area was considered too difficult for pre-Iron Age ploughs to cultivate and hence an unattractive proposition for early farmers. The marginal nature of the region was reinforced by Savory's (1965) overview of the Welsh Bronze Age. Here, Wales was a frontier zone, unable to maintain a distinctive culture due to influences from Ireland and lowland England. The borderland, following Fox's lead, was little more than a barrier, a forest belt, restricting contact with the Peak District to the north but penetrable from the south by the rivers Wye and Severn. Recently, the benefit of a range of new evidence has allowed syntheses of the Welsh data, such as the comprehensive review by Lynch (2000, 138), to identify a certain distinctiveness to the Marches. Here, in places like the Severn Valley, new ideas were adopted early and Lynch has suggested stronger ties with Wessex for the region than with the rest of Wales.

As with Wales, it has been argued that a view of the English Midlands in prehistory as largely devoid of habitation is erroneous. Several lines of enquiry have demonstrated the possibilities of the region, through both research and developer funded projects (Gibson 1989, 4; Carver 1991) and the notion of a prehistoric wilderness has been challenged (Buteux and Hughes 1995). Principal to this changing view has been the new discoveries identified by aerial photography. Pioneered in the area by J.K. St Joseph in 1945, routine aerial reconnaissance by Cambridge University (CUCAP) was supplemented by Chris Musson on behalf of Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT). A study by Whimster (1989) of the mid-section of the Welsh Marches revealed a landscape of largely scattered and isolated crop and parch marks with few concentrations. Further east, most notably along the Warwickshire Avon, Pickering and Baker's photographs (published in Webster and Hopley, 1964) demonstrated the potential of the area, identifying a range of cropmarks with many analogous to Neolithic and Bronze Age examples. Following the West Midlands Research Framework seminars in 2002-2003, a useful series of synthetic and thematic papers were collated for a volume on the prehistory of the West Midlands up to the Iron Age (Garwood 2007c). Encouragingly, recent research interest in Bronze Age landscapes, and particularly settlement (Brück 2001; 2008; Last 2008), has been reflected in a series of volumes covering the borderlands (Mullin 2003; Halstead 2005; Makepeace 2006). Yet Garwood (2011, 10) has recently argued that despite all of the recent work the picture, for the English side of the Anglo-Welsh border at least, is still one of *overall* scarcity of prehistoric evidence with significant concentrations of sites which for the purposes of this study relate to the upper Severn valley and upland Shropshire.

Although the potential and actuality of the region's Neolithic and Bronze Age archaeology is being realised, it has taken time for this to filter through into syntheses on British prehistory (Bradley 1984; Parker Pearson 1993; contributions in Hunter & Ralston 1999). The reasons for this are complex, but partly reflect the scholarly interests of the individual authors. Burgess's (1980b) treatment of Wales for example was to a large extent governed by the metalwork and paid less attention to monuments. Historically there has been a tendency to emphasise the impressive or well documented, so narratives inevitably privilege areas such as Wessex and Orkney. That this imbalance is beginning to be redressed is encouraging. Darvill's (2010) recent example is wide ranging in its geographic scope and Bradley (2007)

has addressed the problem by incorporation of data from commercial archaeology units from across Britain and Ireland.

The lack of synthetic literature for the prehistoric borderlands can be mitigated to some extent with recourse to county volumes. Much of this earlier research that incorporates the study area has concentrated on upstanding monuments such as the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions in Wales and Monmouthshire (RCAHMCW) volumes for Montgomery (1911), Flint (1912), Radnor (1913), Denbigh (1914) and Merioneth (1921). More recent surveys, whilst not always county based, have continued this focus on earthworks and cropmarks (Dinn and Edwards 2004; Stoertz 2004), a notable exception being that of the wide ranging survey of the wetlands of Shropshire (Leah *et al* 1998). Other county based volumes provide detail of finds of metal, stone and pottery in addition to earthworks. Early works of this type, such as Allies (1852) treatment of Worcestershire and Hartshorne (1841) who recorded Shropshire, were incorporated into itineraries; educational forays into the countryside for a discerning and interested public. Catalogues and gazetteers of monuments and artefacts, for the most part compiled by diligent and meticulous fieldworkers in the first half of the last century, are available for Denbighshire (Davies 1929), Flintshire (Davies 1949), Merioneth (Bowen and Gresham 1967), Radnorshire (Jerman 1936; Burgess 1962) and Worcestershire (Smith 1957). The fieldwork of Lily Chitty in cataloguing all known finds in Shropshire and items from other border counties never appeared in a single volume, although a catalogue of her extensive archive has been published by Shropshire Council (Chitty 1992) and her Map C in Fox's *Personality of Britain* (1959) demonstrated the relative densities of Bronze Age finds and barrows. Synthetic county based histories, usually brief, appear in the county archaeological journals, although some lengthier recent treatments include those for Clwyd (Manley 1991; Brown 2004) and Montgomeryshire (Arnold 1990).

Artefacts are covered well in several volumes on both a national and county basis albeit primarily for the Welsh material. A general guide and catalogue of the prehistoric collections of the National Museum of Wales (Grimes 1951) has been superseded by significant single, period based volumes for the Mesolithic and Neolithic (Burrow 2003), and the Bronze Age (Savory 1980), which includes Northover's (1980) compositional analysis of Bronze metalwork. Early Bronze Age ceramics are covered by the island-wide volumes on Beakers (Clarke 1970,

Needham 2005) and Collared Urns (Longworth 1984) and there has been some synthetic consideration in the literature for the Welsh material (Savory 1955; 1957; Griffiths 1957).

2.4 Which way is home? An introduction to the theoretical problem of settlement

The paucity of evidence for settlement during the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age is an acknowledged and long standing problem (Gibson 1982). The relatively substantial domestic buildings that are found in some areas during the earlier Neolithic were succeeded, in some regions at least, by smaller, more ephemeral structures (Darvill 1996). Late Neolithic settlements and houses of stone, such as those found at Skara Brae (Clarke 1976) were not built in the borderlands. House plans when they do survive are generally circular and the presence of internal hearths and pits is a commonality of these structures (Darvill 1996) although the buildings recently discovered at the henges of Durrington Walls (Parker Pearson 2007) and Marden (Leary and Field 2011) are rectangular. If houses are considered rare in the Late Neolithic, they are virtually unknown for the Early Bronze Age in southern Britain. Several stone built houses, varying in shape from circular to sub-rectangular have been found on the Western Isles of Scotland and Shetland but this tradition does not appear further south. Rather the few examples are small, c.5m in diameter, and post or stake built structures such as those from East Anglia (Parker Pearson 2009, 112). Evidence of three small huts, probably not contemporary, associated with Collared Urns and with walls built from withies woven through stakes have been identified at Sant-y-nyll, Glamorgan (Savory 1980, 31). At Stackpole Warren, Pembrokeshire, a roundhouse with a central post and a four post porch has returned dates of 2135-1740 cal BC (CAR-475 3570±70) and 1875-1459 cal BC (CAR-100 3350±70) (Benson *et al.* 1990). Thomas's (1996) assertion that the rarity of Neolithic houses probably indicated that those we do find may be atypical of the contemporary pattern of settlement as a whole is perhaps as likely to be true of the Early Bronze Age.

Surface scatters of flint have been used as proxies for settlement, particularly when considered alongside other classes of evidence (see for example Marshall, 1985) but this interpretation is not without its problems. Barfield (2007, 98-9) has detailed the difficulties of interpreting scatters, particularly when comparing surveys or collections

which have employed different survey methodologies. Additionally, different land use regimes will present an uneven distribution. The uplands in the west of the study area are primarily grasslands and rough pasture (Stamp 1946, and contributions therein) and consequently do not generate surface material in the same manner as that of ploughed landscapes. Although flint scatters have been utilised to provide broad chronological and geographical occupation patterns (Chitty 1963; Halstead 2005, 2007: 169-71) surface scatters are not reliable indicators of *discrete* settlement sites (Mullin 2003, 54-6). Problems include poor chronological resolution due to a lack of stratigraphy and other associations, and the large percentage of undiagnostic waste pieces in comparison to diagnostic finds (Bradley 1999). Although some artefact types such as barbed and tanged arrowheads provide chronological certainty (Green 1980), their recovery from a variety of contexts including burials and stray finds negates their role as reliable site type indicators. The correlation between surface flint scatters and settlement sites is not necessarily straightforward and needs to be demonstrated rather than assumed.

Clearly people were widespread in the borderlands, the utilisation of the landscape is attested by the barrows, cairns and other monuments which begin to appear at this time, in addition to the sometimes extensive scatters of lithic materials across the region (Chitty 1963, Barfield 2007), yet actual *settlements* remain elusive. Various explanations have been suggested to account for this problem, the most pervasive being that of a population practicing some form of mobile subsistence regime. Childe (1940) suggested a model of nomadic pastoralism to explain the virtual absence of settlement sites during the Beaker period. A population continually on the move may have camped or used structures that left little trace, and the few sherds of Beaker pots found at places such as causewayed enclosures could be explained as the debris of such camps (*ibid* 98).

Rather than a fully mobile society, Fleming (1971) suggested that some of the dense barrow cemeteries in Wessex were in the home areas from which people dispersed, engaged in a seasonal pastoralism, although he does not directly address the problem of the lack of physical remains at such settlements. Bradley (1972) rejected the nomadic pastoralist explanation, arguing that it was based on purely negative evidence, i.e., an absence of houses, pits and fields. Further he suggested that most models confused or conflated nomadism and transhumance and did not take into account the growing evidence for arable agriculture. Bradley (1970) also argued

arable farming required permanent settlement and suggested that building techniques that left little trace could explain the lack of visibility of the settlement. Burgess (1980a, 194) was in accordance with this line of reasoning, unable to countenance the construction of the great monuments of the period with a population of 'wandering herdsmen'. The survival of structural evidence beneath barrows also lent support to the argument that processes of deposition and erosion could be masking or destroying the remains of all but the most substantial of dwellings (Bradley 1970). This view has persisted, it has been suggested that such factors were responsible for the dearth of Beaker settlements and that "current archaeological techniques are not sufficient to locate Beaker settlements" (Bewley 2003, 76). Allen (2005) has shown that Beaker domestic sites are present in low lying positions on the chalk downs buried by variable depths of colluviums. Yet it has become increasingly evident that the relative absence of substantial settlement architecture is a real feature of the archaeological record in some regions. Gibson (1982, 27), in his review of Beaker settlements noted that "strictly speaking, it is not a lack of domestic evidence that we have but simply a lack of settlements and house plans of a type with which the subsequent periods have made us familiar".

Extending this perceptive statement, it seems then the problem is not one of archaeological survival but instead is grounded in the conceptual notion of what constitutes a settlement. This is partly explained by the desire to seek a bounded site with 'hard' edges' (Carman 1999), but also by modern assumptions about the past in which ritual and religious belief are separated from the everyday (Bradley 2003; 2005). Brück and Goodman (1999) provide an overview of such problems which they argue emanate from the interpretive frameworks employed by archaeologists. In the first instance this is typified by a dichotomous approach which sees settlement sites as places largely concerned with domestic or residential functions which contrast with the funerary or ritual activity undertaken at cemeteries and monuments. Secondly, ethnocentric approaches have led us to search for those traces of settlement which we associate with a discrete set of 'domestic' activities such as cooking, eating and the raising of children which closely resemble our own. It follows then that we seek stability, enclosure, houses and hearths in the archaeological record.

The clear distinction sought between settlement/domestic and monumental/ritual is elusive. Bradley (2003, 13) demonstrates this by showing how the organization of space within the Northern Circle at Durrington Walls and structures interpreted as

houses such as those at Trelystan, Powys and Down Farm, Woodcuts, Dorset, are exactly the same, the only difference being one of scale. Gibson's (1982, 47) work on Beaker pottery led him to conclude that Beaker domestic sites were unclassifiable and that the division between domestic and ritual was tenuous and probably irresolvable. Defining a settlement is inherently problematic because a wide range of culturally and historically variable territorial and social practices must be taken into account. For Pollard (1999, 90) settlement is both action and noun, process and site; simply, the occupation of a locale for more than an immediate period of time and the location where the daily routines of life are enacted. Brück and Goodman (1999, 14) suggests it is perhaps best thought of as a set of territorial and social practices which encompass a wide range of both daily maintenance and ritual activities. For the Early Bronze Age, Brück (1999, 64) suggests that there is nothing in the archaeological record to suggest the existence of a functionally and/or spatially distinct category of domestic sites. Single artefacts can be found in a variety of contexts at morphologically different sites and therefore suggest a variety of meanings. In addition, finds associated with daily life such as querns, hearths and cooking vessels are found at henges, barrows and ring ditches.

Freed from the constraints of seeking houses and settlements built from our own conceptions of what defines a settlement, we can return to how this realisation can be interpreted. Thomas (1999) and Whittle's (1997) recent arguments for mobile Neolithic populations have been supplemented for the Early Bronze Age (Brück 1999). Brück (*ibid*:64) argues that the models of a settled agricultural base with transhumant elements which have been used to explain seasonally or intermittently inhabited sites are problematic in that they still assume substantial permanently occupied farmsteads. Additionally it has been argued that such deterministic models of transhumance, or equivalents of the medieval and early modern *hafod/hendre* system should not be projected back onto the Early Bronze Age (Moore-Colyer 1996, 18). The climatic conditions of the period obviated the need for such movements and Moore-Colyer (*ibid*.18) questions whether the highland/lowland dichotomies suggested by these models in fact existed during the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age.

Where evidence for structures is preserved, for example under barrows, they are found to be relatively ephemeral in nature. In Wessex many sites appear to be either single short term episodes of activity or sites that have been utilised episodically over

many centuries (Brück 1999, 65). The variable artefactual evidence suggests that different activities may have been carried out at different sites; certainly the lithic evidence suggests parts of the landscape were used for task specific purposes. This, in conjunction with the types of finds such as pottery vessels, flint knives and burnt flints suggests that cooking took place at many different locations, probably in conjunction with activities of a more specialised nature. For Brück, these strands are all suggestive of a form of residential mobility in the landscape. The evidence for cereal cultivation and its implications for theories of nomadic pastoralism have already been mentioned, but rather than privilege the arable regime, Brück (ibid, 66) suggests that cereal cultivation in the Early Bronze Age formed but one element of an economy that incorporated stock raising, hunting, fishing and wild foods, activities that are generally considered marginal in an agricultural economy. This broad-based economy implies a considerable degree of mobility for at least parts of the population, which then leaves the question of crop husbandry. It is generally assumed that cereal cultivation requires constant year round attention yet exceptions can be found in the ethnographic record, especially if the cereals do not form the mainstay of the economy (Hodges 1957). Barrett (1994, 144) suggests that communities secured short-term access to cultivable land in the knowledge that other resources would be available upon relinquishing their claim. Brück's model of residential mobility necessarily requires then that populations have access to large areas of land that offered different opportunities. Following Barrett, she suggests that tenurial rights were probably held by communities rather than households and those resources were periodically reallocated. If this is correct it may go some way to explain why substantial investments were made in communal monuments such as henges and circles rather than houses. There was no need to legitimise a claim over land through the establishment of permanent individual households, the ideology of individual or familial possession and permanence manifested through substantial domestic dwellings was unnecessary. Brück has provided a model through which it is possible to understand an Early Bronze Age cosmology that did not distinguish between ritual and domestic practices, that did not consider it unusual to enact 'ritual' and 'secular' practices at the same locations and which moved from location to location as part of an annual round.

2.5 An unbounded landscape: The evidence for settlement in the borderlands.

This section will outline some of the evidence for occupation and settlement in the region (Fig 3). The period has traditionally been viewed as one of population growth and movement, particularly into the uplands (Lynch 2000: 80), often interpreted as a response to deteriorating soil conditions in the valleys following a millennium of exploitation (Taylor 1980). Whilst this may be true to some degree it is by no means universal and local factors may have played a part (Moore-Colyer 1996, 17). The discussion begins with activities relating to Grooved Ware although is not intended to suggest that Grooved Ware signalled the departure point for upland exploitation; these landscapes had been utilised, if sparsely, since the Mesolithic (Webley 1976).

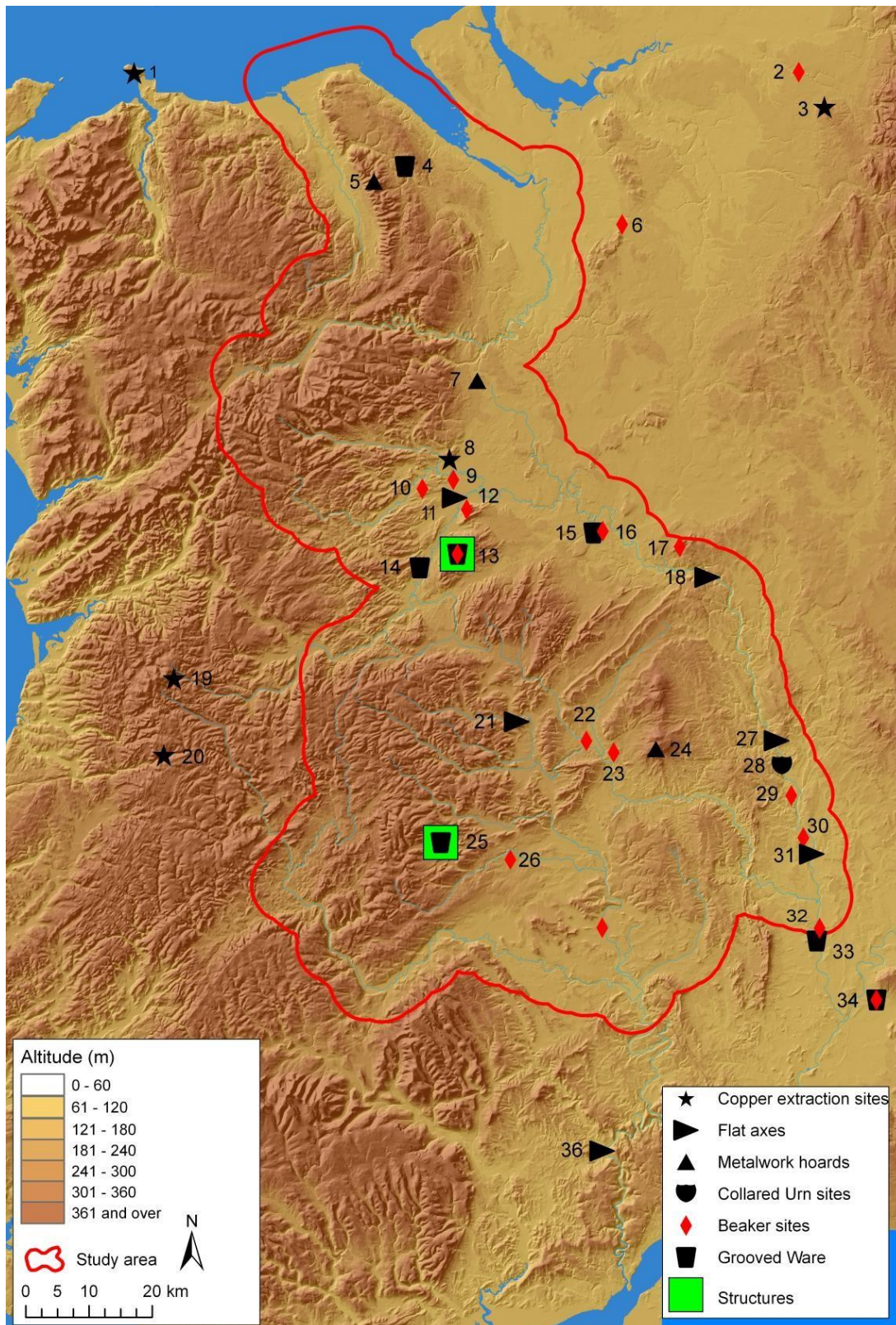


Figure 3: Sites mentioned in the text: 1: Great Orme, 2: Oversley Farm, 3: Alderley Edge 4: Hendre, 5: Moel Arthur, 6: Beeston Castle, 7: Ebnall, 8: Llanmynech, 9: Four Crosses, 10: Collfryn, 11: Trederwen, 12: Breidden, 13: Trelystan, 14: Sarn-y-bryn-caled, 15: Moel Brace, 16: Sharpstones Hill, 17: Wrekin, 18: Ironbridge, 19: Nantyeira 20: Copa Hill, 21: Clunbury, 22: Bromfield, 23: Rock Green, 24: Titterstone Clee Hill, 25: Walton, 26: Upper Headlands, 27: Kidderminster Foreign, 28: Blackstone, 29: Astley, 30: Holt, 31: Bevere Island, 32: Kempsey, 33: Clifton Quarry, 34: Hunstmans Quarry, 35: Wellington Quarry, 36: Monmouth

2.6 A house in the country? The evidence for houses in the borderlands

The evidence for settlement at Trelystan, Powys, during the Late Neolithic comes from the discovery of two stake-walled structures and a scatter of pits found during the excavation of two round barrows (Britnell 1982). The full sequence of activity is described later; here the focus will be on the pre-barrow settlement evidence (Fig 4).

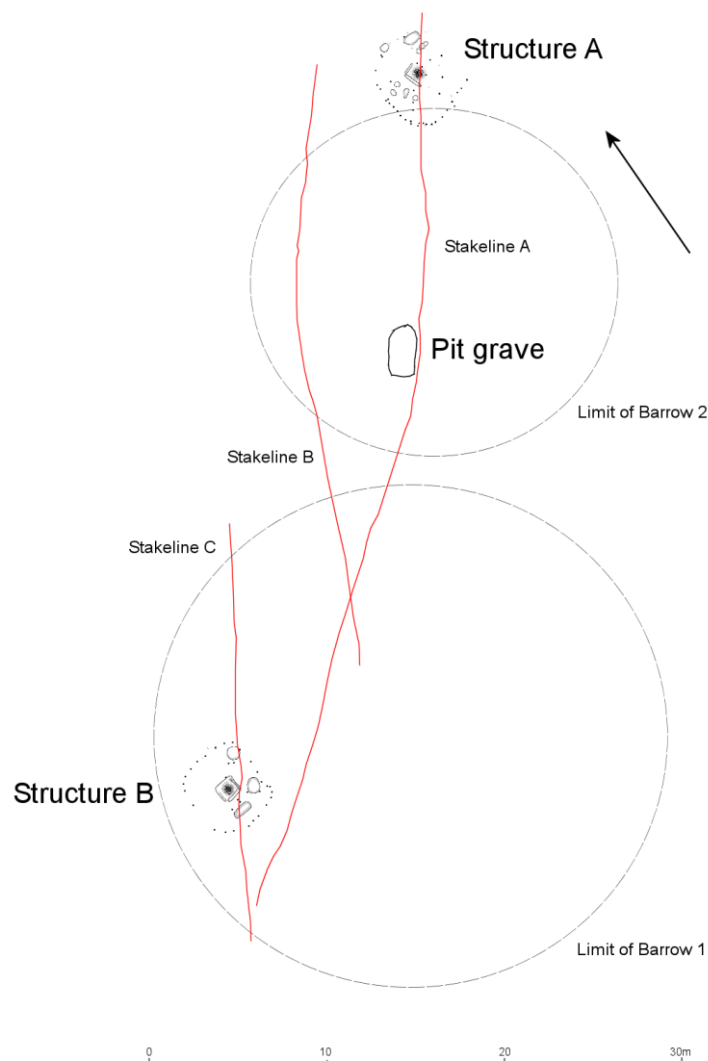


Figure 4: The relationship of the pit grave, structures, barrows and stakelines at Trelystan (after Britnell 1982)

The setting is an upland one, to the northern end of the ridge of Long Mountain. The site itself is located off the ridge to the west at a height of 370m AOD. According to the chronology posited by the excavator, the first activity at the site was the digging of

a rock cut grave into which a cremation was placed and covered by a cairn. The excavator also suggested the possibility of an inhumation accompanied by either a wooden coffin or some other sort of mortuary structure in the same grave.

A radiocarbon date of 3330-2870 cal BC (Car-282 4345±65 BP) was obtained from oak charcoal from the rubble filling of the grave (*ibid.* 183)

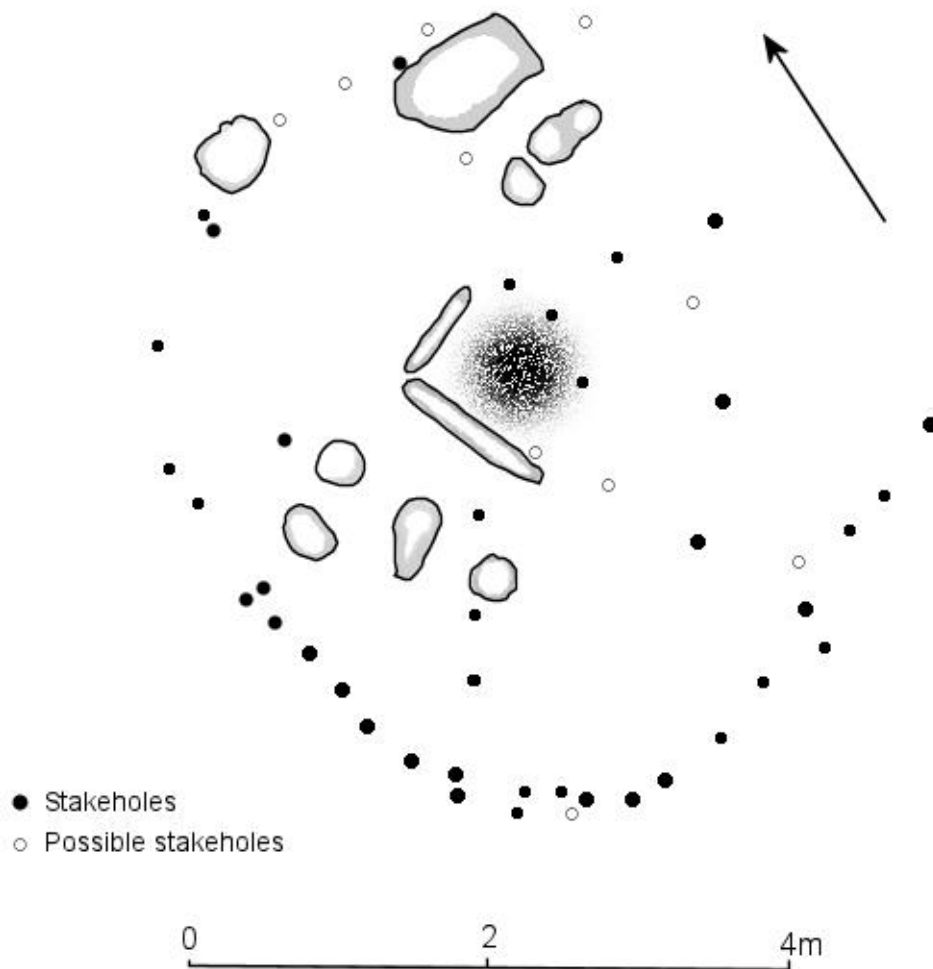


Figure 5: The stakeholes, pits and hearth of Structure A, Trelystan (after Britnell 1982)

The next phase of activity is marked by the construction of two structures within 25m and to the north-east and south-west of the pit grave. Structure A (Fig 5) was identified by stakeholes forming a sub-rectangular structure 4.5m by at least 4m. This enclosed a central hearth c0.8m across, bounded on two sides by shallow slots probably dug to hold upright slabs. The fill of the western slot contained a small hazel twig which returned a radiocarbon date of 2830-2210 cal BC (CAR-276 3955±70). Inside the perimeter were further stakeholes and eight pits which the excavator

considered to belong to the structure. The function of the pits, most of which contained charcoal and black soil is uncertain. Their shallow nature precluded a function as postholes and the only finds apart from the charcoal were two small fragments of burnt clay from a single pit.

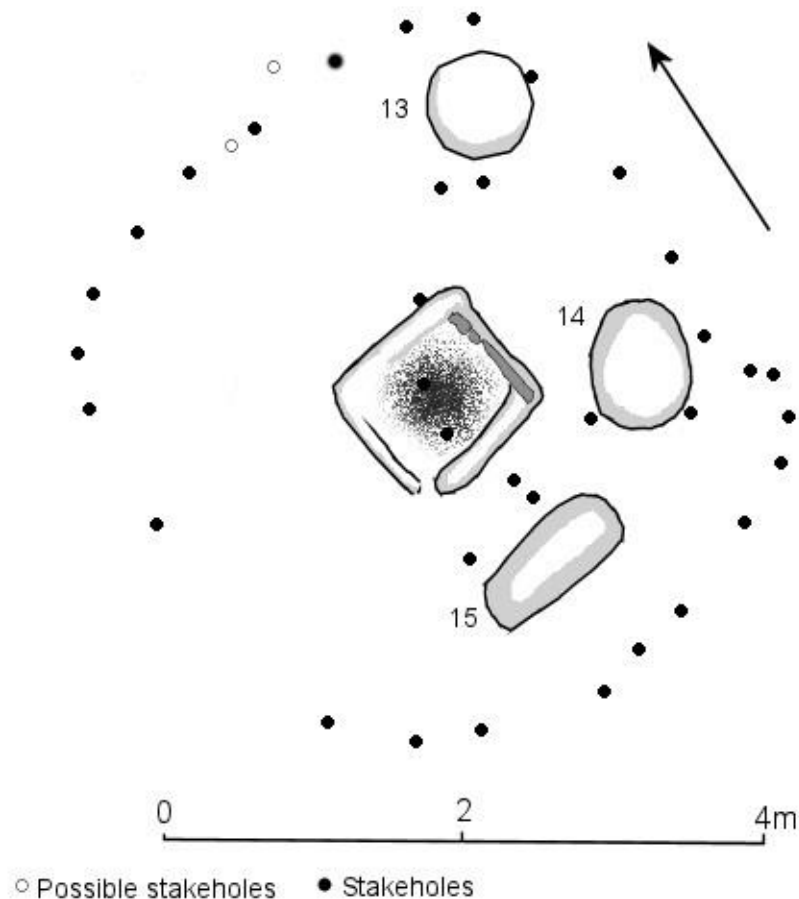


Figure 6: The stakeholes, pits and hearth of Structure B, Trelystan (after Britnell 1982)

Structure B, located c.40m to the north-east is a stakehole structure with many similarities to structure A (Fig 6). Approximately 25 stakeholes formed the wall-line of a sub-rectangular structure 3.9 by 4.2m across, with a gap on the western side interpreted as a door. The hearth was of a similar size to that in structure A and was bounded by shallow slots, one of which still contained upright shale slabs. The nature of the activity inside this structure appears to have been different to structure A. Here pits were dug but cultural material was deposited within them, including Grooved Ware fragments, flint waste and tools including scrapers and arrowheads, and charcoal. One of the three pits (pit 13) within the structure was lined on three sides by fire cracked-stones although the pit showed no sign of *in-situ* burning. Hazel and rowan charcoal from the pit fill returned a date of 3090-2630 cal BC (CAR-272

4260±70). A similar pit (pit 14) also contained fire-cracked stones, Grooved Ware, flint and charcoals identified as hazel, hawthorn and rowan derived from this pit provided a radiocarbon date of 2890-2500 cal BC (CAR-273 4135±65). Another pit (pit 15) differed morphologically from the others in that it was rectangular but contained a similar assemblage of fire-cracked stones, Grooved Ware fragments and flint flakes. Grooved Ware sherds were also recovered from one of a number of pits outside of the structure and from within the matrix of a thin soil deposit that covered the hearth. This layer was dated by hazelnut shells to 2850-2290 cal BC (CAR-274, 3985±70).

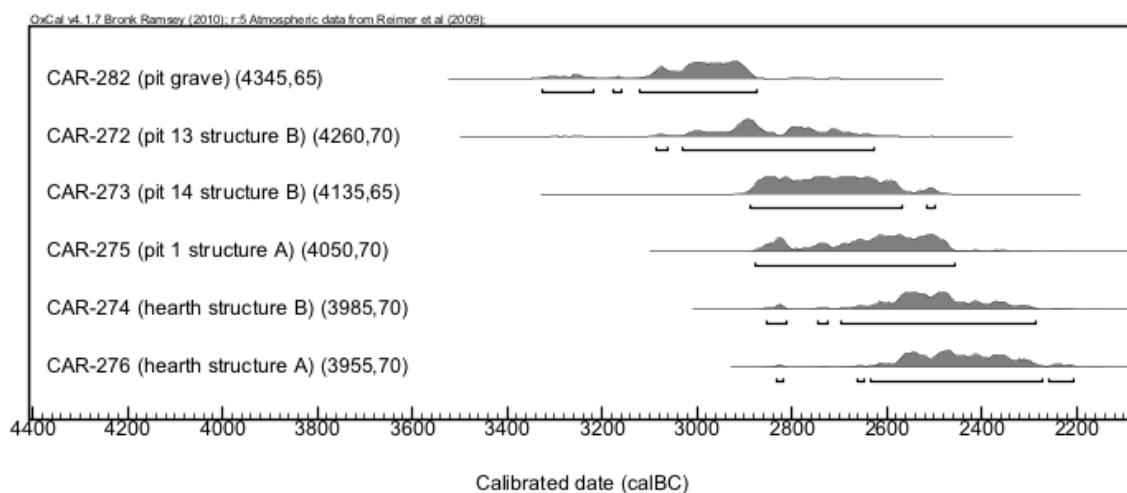


Figure 7: Radiocarbon dates from Trelystan A and B

The structures at Trelystan have been interpreted as houses, fortuitously protected by the later barrow mounds. The flimsy or temporary nature of the structures is assumed by their stakehole construction which suggests a bent frame perhaps covered by skins. Although the radiocarbon dates are comparable, the resolution is too coarse and there is no stratigraphic evidence that can determine the precise temporal relationship of the two structures; it is impossible therefore to determine whether the two sites stood at the same time. If the structures were not contemporary then the similarities in size and construction could indicate that the same builders returned to a favoured site in successive years. The duplication of some stakeholes at Structure A may be evidence to suggest rebuilding and thus repeated visits. Another possibility is that the structures were contemporary but were used in different ways. This could explain the difference in the fills of the pits between the structures; Structure B's pits were deliberately filled with material containing Grooved Ware and flint whereas the pits in Structure A were almost completely devoid of artefacts. The manner in which the pits were filled may be to some extent dependent upon their initial usage. The pits

containing Grooved Ware were those in which the fire-cracked stones were also present. If these pits were used for heating the contents of the pit as suggested by the excavator, it may be that they had to be sealed in a certain manner once abandoned.

Gibson (1996, 138) comments on the relatively small size of the houses when compared to other broadly contemporary structures. Whilst agreeing that they most likely represent seasonal temporary domestic structures, he raises the intriguing possibility that the large number of fire cracked stones could imply the use of the structures as sweat houses in a similar vein to that argued for some burnt mound sites, an idea recently revisited for the small structure at Marden Henge (Leary and Field 2011, 34). Thomas (1996, 7) has also suggested an alternative to the structures as houses. He argues that the site is in an unfavourable topographic location and the flimsy nature of the structures, the proximity to the earlier Neolithic pit grave and the later use of the grave to locate two round barrows are evidence for a continued association with mortuary practices. The paucity of food plants from contexts associated with Structure B may also be suggestive of a non-domestic function (Hillman in Britnell 1982, 198).

Evidence for further activity possibly related to settlement at Trelystan is tentative. The excavator suggested that some form of cultivation may have been practiced at the site after the structures went out of use (Britnell 1982, 186). This is implied by the scatter of charcoal and Beaker sherds throughout the profile of the buried soil. Additionally a series of linear stakeholes have been interpreted by their excavator as the fence lines of a boundary that shifted in response to the construction activities at the barrows (*ibid*, 160). The stratigraphic relationships show that the earliest stake line, (Fence A), postdates Structure A but predates all the elements of the barrow (Barrow I). A burnt area on the west side of burial 3 at Barrow I overlies part of stake-line B and provides a terminus ante quem (TAQ) 2450-1960 cal BC (CAR-279 3750±70). Britnell (*ibid* 190) suggests that the stake-lines could represent part of a more extensive form of temporary land division, perhaps for the protection of periodic arable production, but equally physical boundaries can function in a variety of non-utilitarian ways (Dowling 2006).

There is another possibility to the sequence at the site and thus a slight change in emphasis. As Britnell (1982, 183-4) recognises, the pit grave is problematic. The presence of a wooden coffin casts some doubt on a Late Neolithic determination as

such grave furniture is usually associated with Beaker and Early Bronze Age burials (Ashbee 1960, 86-92). The radiocarbon date is taken from a piece of carbonized oak found amongst the rubble collapse of the overlying cairn and thus may suffer from the 'old wood' effect (Bowman 1990, 15). Additionally the small overlying cairn, which appears to have been disturbed in antiquity, is of comparable dimensions and on the same alignment as the later satellite cairns of Barrow I. This reading of the evidence would place the pits and structures at the beginning of the sequence and it is these, and their associated activities, which provided a locus for later burial activities rather than a grave, a pattern evident at other sites some of which are discussed below.

The site may have witnessed a period of disuse after the abandonment of the structures and before the commencement of activity by Beaker users, the sole evidence for which comes from Beaker sherds on the old ground surface and incorporated into the barrow mounds (Britnell 1982, 145). The distribution of residual material from within the two barrow mounds also suggests some degree of chronological and spatial separation of the use of the site. Barrow I was dominated by Beaker material with only one sherd of Grooved Ware whilst the in the mound of Barrow II the precise opposite was found.

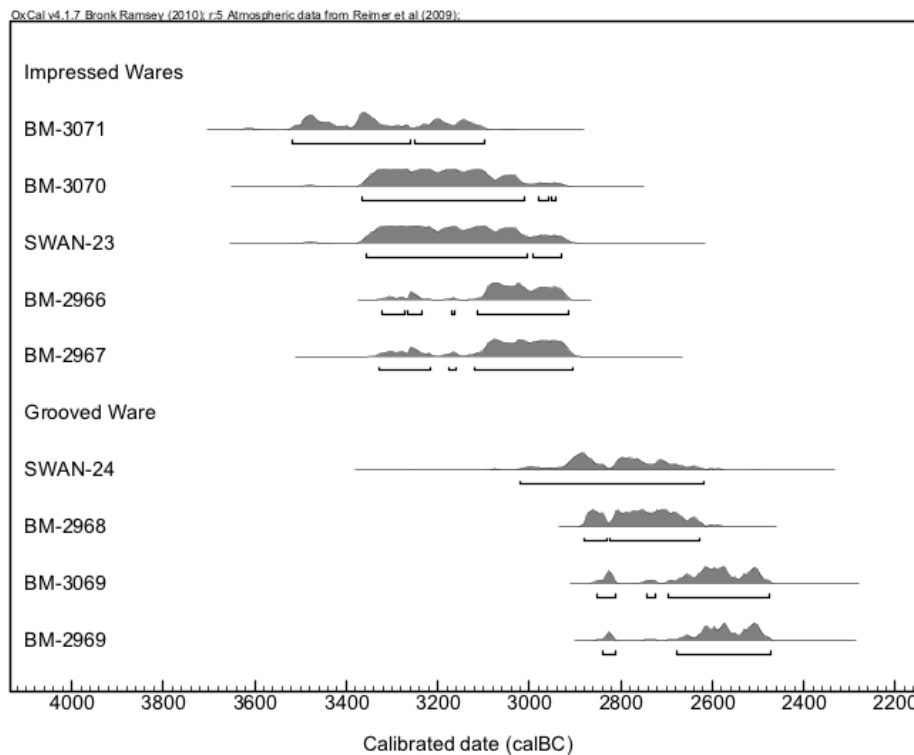


Figure 8: Radiocarbon dates from Upper Ninepence, Walton (Gibson 1999)

The sequence of activity evident at Trelystan finds comparison with a site at Walton, Powys, approximately 45km to the south (Gibson 1996; 1999). Here in Upper Ninepence Field, Hindwell Farm, Walton beneath what is assumed to be a Bronze Age barrow, was what appears to be a long history of settlement activity indicated by 41 pits, five hearths and 227 stakeholes (Figs 8, 9). Although mostly undated, Impressed Wares and Grooved Ware pottery and associated flint assemblages were recovered from some of the pits which suggest two phases of activity (see Figure 8). The pits did not contain mixed pottery assemblages except in one case in which a sherd of Fengate Ware was considered residual.

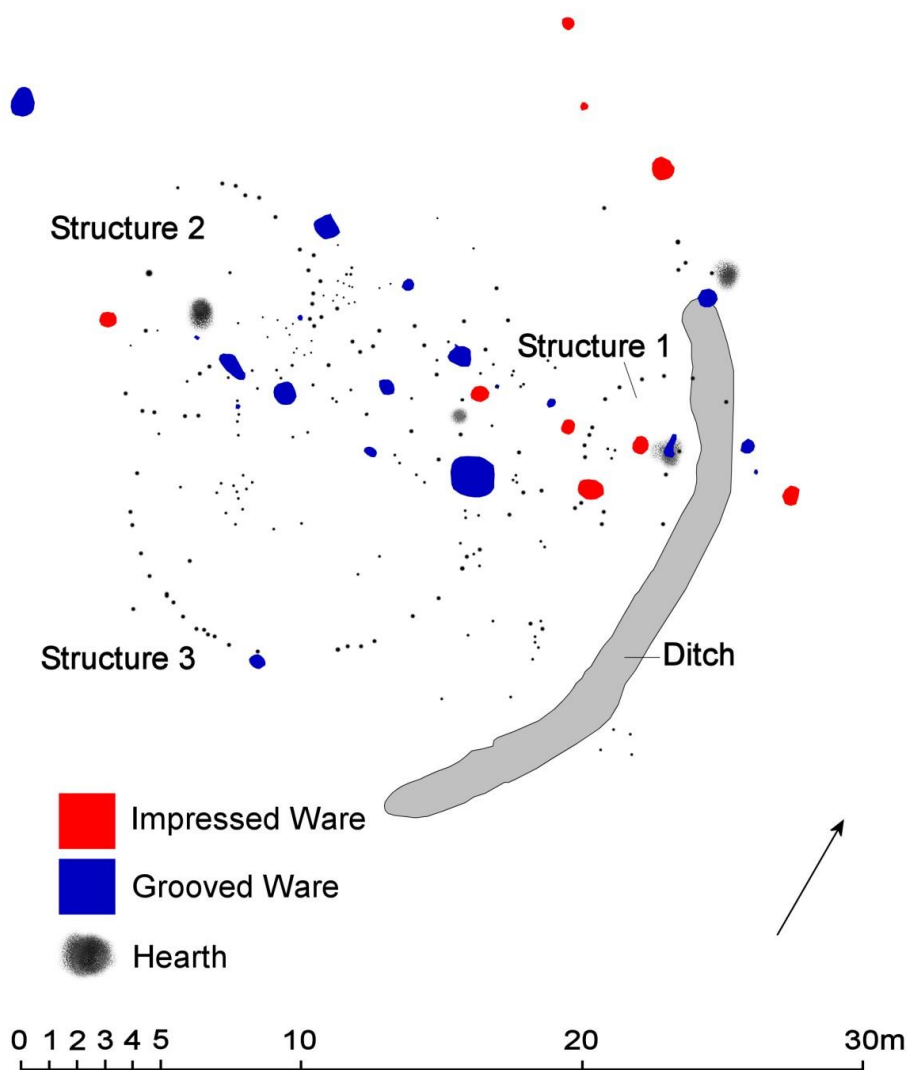


Figure 9: The relationship of Grooved Ware and Impressed Ware contexts to the pre-barrow structures at Upper Ninepence, Walton. Undated features removed for clarity (based on figures 31 and 33, Gibson 1999)

The pits containing the Impressed Wares were oval, shallow and single filled. They contained fragments of between one and three vessels but the greater diversity came with the flint assemblages. Some pits contained only a couple of waste pieces whilst others had a larger amount as well as finished items such as arrowheads. The excavator suggests that the apparent differences in content do not appear to be reflected in either the distribution pattern or the shape and dimensions of the pits (Gibson 1999, 33). Further, the lithic material was considered waste, or well used and broken, and similarly the ceramics were in sherd form when deposited as there were no complete vessels. Residue analysis on some of the pots provides evidence for the cooking of meat whilst charred plant remains from a pit indicates limited cereal utilisation. The burial of fragments of pots and various lithics then the rapid backfilling of the pits probably represents something more than utilitarian waste disposal. Radiocarbon dates from five of the pits suggest the activity was taking place c.3300-2900 cal BC.

The second phase of the site concerns the pits associated with Grooved Ware and structural activity. Pit digging was more extensive in this phase and seventeen pits were found to contain Grooved Ware. In total the pits produced fragments of 23 vessels including rare internally decorated examples. The pit contents of waste material, pots with evidence for cooking and charcoal-rich soils were similar to those associated with the Impressed Ware phase, with the obvious ceramic difference. There is some variety with regard to the relative abundance of material contained within the Grooved Ware pits with ceramics and flints present to greater or lesser degrees. The change in ceramics is also accompanied by a change in animal associations and possibly the use of cereals, rare during the Impressed Ware phase, but now virtually non-existent (Caseldine and Barrow in Gibson 1999, 146). Many Grooved Ware pits contain animal bones yet the problem of acidic soils in this landscape leaves little scope for bone preservation. However, evidence for exploitation of animals comes from lipid analysis which demonstrated the association of Grooved Ware and pigs (Dudd *et al* 1999), a pattern evidenced elsewhere (Richards 1990). As with Trelystan, there is no evidence that the Upper Ninepence pits ever held posts and the nature of deposition, as with the preceding period of activity suggests something more than rubbish disposal.

Three stakehole structures can be defined at Upper Ninepence Field, although only Structure 1 could be securely dated to the Grooved Ware phase with the hearth at the

centre of the structure returning a date of 3020-2620 cal BC (SWAN-24 4240±70 BP). The structure consists of thirteen stakeholes describing a broken circle 6m in diameter, enclosing a central hearth. Four stakeholes appear to form an entrance or porch feature. The stratigraphy and radiocarbon dating show that the structure represents the earliest Grooved Ware related activity on the site. This is followed by the digging of a penannular ditch that cuts the structure on its eastern side, and is in turn cut by a pit containing Grooved Ware. Pit digging and deposition activities appear to have commenced once the structure had gone out of use (Gibson 1999, 41).

Structure 2 is a roughly circular arrangement of stakeholes approximately 8m in diameter and with a hearth just off-centre. Structure 3 comprised stakeholes in a circle approximately 60% complete with a diameter of 12m. Although there was no hearth associated with this arrangement of stakeholes, a shallow patch of discoloured subsoil with a high phosphate count lay at the centre and could possibly have held an unaccompanied inhumation that has subsequently decayed. If this scenario is correct then structure 3 could represent a stake circle phase of the barrow.

The topographic settings of Trelystan and Walton are very different. Trelystan at 370m AOD lies just off the top of a long upland ridge whereas Upper Ninepence at 206m AOD is situated on a local high spot in the Walton Basin, a low lying area of land surrounded by higher hills. The constructional and organizational similarities between these upland and lowland sites do not seem to suggest a variation based on permanent and temporary usage. If models of permanent low lying settlements and temporary upland settlement along the hafod/hendre model are to be accepted, we would expect to see more the more substantial structure in the lowland setting. In fact larger stakeholes were used in the Trelystan houses, although this may have more to do with its relatively exposed position; Gibson (1996, 138) has commented on the sites susceptibility to drifting snow and strong south-westerly gales. It seems then that there is little difference between upland and valley sites. Both Trelystan and Upper Ninepence have insubstantial structures lending credence to the suggestion of a mobile population, but one drawn to places that held meaning; these places were not the result of random selection for overnight stays. They were utilised because they were the correct place at which to conduct certain practices. Thomas (2010, 9) suggests that pits containing placed deposits at structures such as this may represent the end of the occupation of a house, although the radiocarbon dates from Trelystan appear to contradict this. Here it appears that the hearths may be the last phase of

activity and whilst this does not necessarily negate Thomas's argument, it may suggest that such activities are more nuanced than previously thought and the practices may vary according to factors including topographic difference. This may be apparent at Upper Ninepence where the relationship of the Grooved Ware pits and the structures is uncertain as the majority of the pits are located outside of the areas defined by stakeholes.

2.7 Pits and pots make places; ceramics and depositional practices in the borderlands

Although the structures at Trelystan and Upper Ninepence are rare for the area, the digging of pits and deposition of Grooved Ware is less so, although still uncommon. Grooved Ware is found throughout Britain and is typically found in small pits or hollows, either in groups or as isolated finds (Cleal and MacSween 1999) and is current during the period c.2900-2100 cal BC in southern Britain (Garwood 1999). Although pits are often seen as evidence for settlement, it has been recognised that they represent more than a utilitarian method to dispose of waste material (Pollard 2001; 2002; Garrow et al. 2005). The deposition of cultural material had been practiced throughout the Neolithic but seems to have reached its zenith during the Late Neolithic with Grooved Ware associated pits (Thomas 1999, 69). The morphology of the pits, the apparent structure to some of the contents and fills and the amount of tools compared to waste flakes all point to a practice that goes beyond storage or mundane disposal of domestic waste. Although certain elements are common across many such pits, the nature and structure of the deposition varied depending upon local or personal preference (Pollard 2001). Fills of the pits may exhibit layering of clean and charcoal rich soils into which specialized artefacts were placed. Thomas (1999, 73) suggests that people went to a place with the intention of carrying out a set of activities which included the digging of a pit and subsequent object deposition. This is an important distinction as it means that the pits are not the incidental outcome of the use of a particular location and thus cannot be easily equated with traditional ideas of settlement. The actions of pit digging and object deposition brought meaning to a place (Thomas 1999, 73; Edmonds 2002, 29) and thus it is unsurprising to find later monuments such as barrows built in the same location. As Bradley (1991, 136) reminds us "...all monuments are in places, but it is given to very few places to become monuments". This is not just a matter of fortuitous preservation of the pits by barrow mounds; Cleal (1999, 6) suggests it is reasonable

to expect features with Grooved Ware within c200m of a barrow. This aspect of the material record provides some tantalising clues as to at least some of the possible choices for barrow location. Certain places in the landscape attained an importance that continued for generations and it raises questions as to how these sites were marked or remembered.

An example of this extended activity was revealed by the excavation of what was presumed to be a round barrow at Hendre, Clwyd, but was in fact a natural mound (Brassil and Gibson 1999). In common with Trelystan, Hendre would perhaps not be considered a typical settlement location, located on a spur at a height of c.230m and overlooking the valley to the south. The nature of activity here is not clear although it seems the mound was a focus for activity during at least three stages (Fig 10). A ditch or elongated pit to the north of the mound may have been used as a hearth. Evidence for *in-situ* burning came from a basal fill containing fire-cracked stones, charcoal and ash, which returned a radiocarbon date of 3020-2620 cal BC (CAR-1278 4240±70). On the north–east slope of the mound itself pits were dug, containing in various quantities charcoal, Grooved Ware fragments (of Durrington Walls sub-type) and lithic tools and waste. The recognised lithic implements were of good quality flint presumed to be associated with an eastern source and included diagnostic Late Neolithic implements characteristic of Grooved Ware sites. A radiocarbon date of 2560-2140 cal BC (CAR-1279 3870±70) was obtained from alder charcoal from the base of one of the pits. The final activity at the site comes from a later Early Bronze Age multiple inhumation inserted into the top of the mound and dated to 1900-1690 cal BC (BM-2922 3480±40). There are some intriguing possibilities to consider at this site. The arc of pits avoids the highest (and central) part of the mound leading the excavators to ponder whether they were deliberately placed to respect a perceived primary burial (Brassil and Gibson 1999, 96). Did the Grooved Ware users mistake the mound for a burial site as later archaeologists initially did? Although no other known parallels were found, there remains the possibility that the Grooved Ware users chose the site because it represented a place of burial as there is some evidence for Neolithic round barrows in the study area (Warrilow et al 1986, 81). Whilst of course this is speculative, it certainly looks as though the ‘mistake’ was made later in the Early Bronze Age with the inhumations. It has been suggested that just as memory plays a part in the construction of a monument’s biography, the ‘forgetting’ of a landscape’s history may result in the inadvertent selection of natural mounds for burials (Mullin 2001). It is perhaps more likely that this site was chosen because it was a significant

natural place which generally gain their archaeological visibility during the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (Bradley 1991).

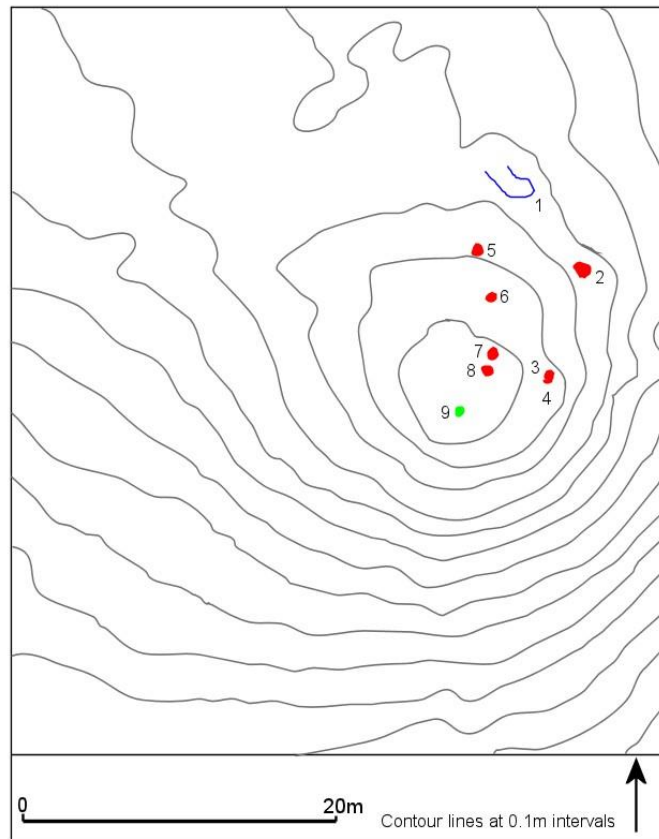


Figure 10: Mound at Hendre, Flintshire. 1. Ditch; 2-8. Pits; 9. Early Bronze Age inhumation. (After Brassil and Gibson 1999).

The majority of the Grooved Ware from Upper Ninepence, Trelystan and Hendre is of the Durrington Walls sub-style. This style of Grooved Ware is more commonly associated with henge enclosures and timber circles, whilst it is the Clacton/Woodlands styles which are usually recovered from pits (Garwood 1999, 159). Garwood (ibid) has suggested that distinctive Grooved Ware assemblages were intended for specific ritual contexts, if this is so, it would suggest then that such depositional practices were adapted or reworked for use in local contexts in the Borderlands. Other examples of indeterminate sub-styles have been recovered from this central part of the Marches including six small sherds recovered from a shallow round based pit c.30m from the timber circle at pit 115, Sarny-bryn-caled (Gibson 1994) and a single heavily abraded sherd from a ring ditch c.400m further north. At Meole Brace, Shropshire a single piece of Grooved Ware associated with Mortlake Impressed Ware came from a shallow pit close to a ring ditch (Hughes and Woodward 1995).

The only other examples in the study area come from further south and east in Worcestershire. In the south-eastern edge of the study area on the east bank of the river Severn, excavations ahead of gravel extraction at Clifton Quarry, Severn Stoke revealed five pits beside a palaeochannel, three of which contained Grooved Ware, flint tools and debitage (Mann & Jackson, forthcoming). One pit, relatively isolated from the others, is noteworthy for the content and nature of deposition (Fig 11). Four large pieces of Grooved Ware were placed at the base, before being filled with a matrix that contained not only the characteristic assemblage of Grooved Ware fragments, flint tools and debitage but a collection of axe heads (Fig 12).



Figure 11: Clifton Quarry, Worcestershire (Pit 2024) fully excavated with Grooved Ware sherds lying on the base (©Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeological Service)

The assemblage consisted of two virtually complete polished stone axes, a flint axe and large fragments from two or three burnt and heat polished stone axes. All of the axe heads and fragments were made from materials found a considerable distance away. Three are of Group VII provenance from Penamaenmawr in North Wales, one is of possible Group I origin from West Penwith in Cornwall and the last is of unknown provenance but the nearest sources are likely to be North France or Scotland (Ixer, forthcoming). The charred remains of grain and apple seeds from the pit returned dates falling in the range 2900-2600 cal BC (OxA-18250, 4146 ±28; OxA-18369,

4222; OxA-18370, 4148 ±31; SUERC-16381, 4170 ±35; SUERC-16382, 4135 ±35; SUERC-16383, 4170 ±35).

In common with other Grooved Ware sites (Mukherjee *et al* 2008) absorbed residues on the pottery indicate the use of dairy and porcine fats. Later activity at this locale is attested by a pit containing three sherds of comb-decorated Beaker c.60m to the west of the Grooved Ware pits and a burnt mound, dated from a series of samples to 1410-1300 cal BC and 1370-1250 cal BC, within 100m of the pit containing the axe heads (Mann & Jackson, forthcoming, 19). This area around Severn Stoke and Kempsey is significant due to a concentration of ring ditches, possible henge sites, a pit circle and a recently discovered pit alignment dated to 2410-2130 cal BC (Miller et al. 2004). Just south of Kempsey a rare handled Beaker (Fig 13) found in the gravels (Hawkes 1935) seems to be the most westerly example of a concentration of Beaker sites which extends eastwards along the Avon valley and includes Hill and Moor Quarry (Else 1932, 41) and the double Beaker burial on Bredon Hill (Thomas 1965).



Figure 12: Stone and flint axes from Clifton Quarry (pit 2024) Worcestershire (©Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeological Service)



Figure 13: *The handled Beaker from Kempsey, Worcester (Hawkes 1935)*

The arrival of Beakers does not seem to have affected the nature of the settlement record in this part of Britain. Although the earliest Beakers are found in graves, later in the sequence they seem to have been utilised in much the same way as previous ceramic styles (Gibson 1982). This does not mean that all Beakers served the same purpose; Boast (1995) argues that Beakers used in burials were produced specifically for this purpose and were usually of poor quality fabrics made to look good by surface treatments and complex design elements.

On the south slopes of Bredon Hill, Grooved Ware and Beaker activity predated a ring ditch at Aston Mill farm (Dinn and Evans 1992) and Beaker pits and possible Grooved Ware were discovered at Hunstmans Quarry, Kemerton (Jackson and Napthan 1998). At Holt, Worcestershire on the terraces of the River Sever (Hunt *et al* 1986) an ill-defined feature but probably a pit, was found between the two circuits of a ring ditch (site B) in a barrow cemetery. This feature contained what was considered domestic Beaker sherds and was sealed by a thin layer of charcoal.

The sequence of activity shown at Holt and other sites, that of pit digging, deposition of Beaker material and the incorporation of these contexts within ring ditches is mirrored at sites further north along the Upper Severn and the Teme. Activity at Bromfield, Shropshire was identified by Beaker sherds representing four vessels found in pits close to earlier Neolithic pits and within the Early Bronze Age barrow cemetery (Stanford 1982, 287-9). Beneath Barrow B15 in what was termed an 'occupation hollow' small Beaker sherds representing 3 to 5 Bell Beakers were

scattered throughout the fill (Hughes *et al* 1995). Similarly at Sharpstones Hill, Shropshire, residual Beaker sherds were found from an Iron Age / Romano British context but within the perimeter of the eastern ring ditch at Site A (Barker *et al* 1991). Excavation at Four Crosses, Powys (Warrilow *et al* 1986) revealed a small shallow non-funerary Beaker pit within a ring ditch (Site 2) containing sherds from about seven vessels and, unusually for a single assemblage, three different fabrics. The pit also contained abundant charcoal and fragments of burnt clay. Additional sherds, some from the same vessels as the pit examples, were found within two metres of the pit. The excavators could offer little explanation for the wide span of radiocarbon dates from the pit (2910-2580 cal BC; 2570-2150 cal BC; 2290-1890 cal BC; respectively CAR-767, 4190±70; CAR-811, 3890±70; CAR-810, 3690±70) although animal disturbance was reported. The remaining fragments were distributed around the site with thought to be residual material that became incorporated into the barrow mounds. The finger-nail decorated sherds, comb stamped decoration and oblique motifs of the Four Crosses assemblage point to a late stylistic Beaker phase and compares favourably with examples from Trelystan although there is no correlation with regard to fabrics. Indeed, the range of fabrics employed at Four Crosses suggests selection of raw materials from a wide area and they are not comparable with the fabrics from sites in the near area such as Breidden and Collfryn.

Although most of the Beaker finds have resulted from the excavation of later funerary sites, there are exceptions. An isolated pit at Longmore Hill Farm, Astley, Worcestershire, contained fragments from at least 13 different Beaker pots, including comb decorated Bell Beakers, ascribed a date within the second quarter of the third millennium BC (Dinn and Hemingway 1992). Other finds indicating activity included burnt stones, burnt animal remains, and charred plant remains and hazelnut shells. A large amount of flint waste accompanied two small round scrapers, one found 60m to the south of the pit. An area of over 100m² was cleaned but no other features or finds were discovered although one of Worcestershire's rare round barrows (Green 1962) lies just 600m to the north-east. The excavator interpreted the finds from the pit as a secondary deposit of domestic rubbish; the sherds were unabraded and assumed to have been deposited soon after breakage. However, this interpretation does not adequately deal with the fact that only a small proportion of the sherds from each vessel entered the pit fills.

Further examples of Beaker material not directly associated with later funerary activity come from a possible hearth at Rock Green, near Ludlow in the Teme Valley, Shropshire (Carver and Hummler 1991), and from the long term excavations at Wellington Quarry, a site located on the broad floodplain of the River Lugg in Herefordshire (Jackson 2007). Here activity is in the form of spreads of material including Beaker pottery recorded from a pit, alluvial deposits, channel fills and unstratified finds. This includes barbed and tanged and leaf-shaped arrowheads, knives, scrapers and fragments of polished axes and arrowheads. The range of contexts makes interpretation of activity difficult but they must be considered in the light of the strong funerary context of the site. Here a well-furnished Bell Beaker grave lies within 400 metres of at least three ring ditches (Harrison *et al* 1999). At Upper Headlands, Herefordshire, five sherds representing four vessels were recovered from the upper fills of an indeterminate feature close to the river Arrow (White 2003). This site is situated just over a kilometre from the barrow and ring ditch cemetery at Milton's Cross and approximately 7km from Aymestrey, one of only four Beaker burials in Herefordshire.

The Beaker remains at Breidden hillfort, Powys illustrate well the difficulty in dealing with sites with no direct funerary association. The pre-rampart phase lithic and ceramic finds thinly scattered over the whole of the excavated area date from the Neolithic to the Early Bronze age (Musson *et al* 1991). The ceramic evidence includes Impressed Wares, comb-stamped Beaker and Food Vessel types, whilst beads of jet, faience and amber were also present. The hilltop was probably utilised intermittently by small groups over a long period but probably for different purposes. A radiocarbon date of 2130-1540 cal BC (HAR-470 3500 ±100 BP) was obtained from three bowl-hearths behind the rampart and a firepit or hearth in the hillfort interior returned a date from hazel charcoal of 2570-1980 cal BC (BM-882 3826±106). These hearths may indicate settlement of some description but finds of beads of jet, faience and amber were also present, artefacts usually associated with funerary activities. The use of such hilltop sites continued throughout the period. At Collfryn, Powys an elongated pit inside a later Iron age enclosure contained a small assemblage of Beaker pottery and oak and hazel fragments provided a radiocarbon date of 2470-1980 cal BC (CAR-572 3790±90) (Britnell 1989). Other hilltop sites yielding some evidence for Beaker activity include Lliwyn Bryn-dinas Hillfort, Llgedwyn (Musson *et al* 1992) and the Wrekin, Shropshire (Stanford 1984).

Settlement activity from later into the Early Bronze Age is virtually non-existent within the study area. Small glimpses may indicate areas of potential but even these are fraught with uncertainty. For example, a Collared Urn (Fig 14) found on the east bank of the River Severn at Blackstone, near Bewdley, Worcestershire (Hurst et al 2010) demonstrates the ambiguity of sites with little or no associated structural evidence.

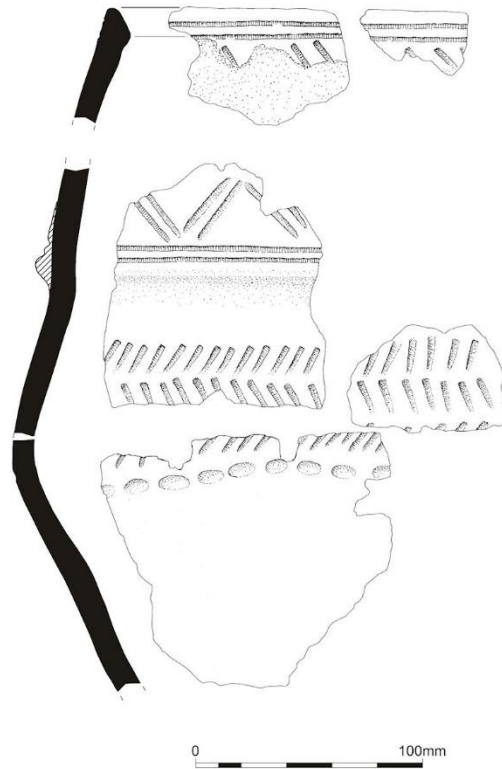


Figure 14: Collared urn from Blackstone, Worcestershire (©Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeological Service)

The sherds were scattered throughout a feature interpreted as a gully and in the absence of bone, cremated or otherwise, a domestic function was assigned, a relatively rare assignation but not unknown (Longworth 1984, 76-8). The interior of the vessel had a small amount of carbonised residue at the level of the carination, which could indicate cooking but it is equally likely that it held cremated remains at some point which did not survive the acid soil. Also present, but not from the gully, were flint scrapers indicative of Beaker and Early Bronze Age styles. Hurst *et al.* (2010) speculates that the site may have been chosen for its proximity to a crossing point of the Severn; a hollow way leads from the site to the river, several of which are known between Blackstone and Bewdley. Finds dredged from the Severn here include a Group XII battle-axe (Smith 1957) as well as later Bronze Age metalwork

and signal the eastern terminus of Chitty's (1963) postulated Clun-Clee ridgeway. It is unclear whether the finds were lost on the river crossing or represent votive deposition, a point which will be considered below. Beaker pits and later settlement in close proximity to river fording points have been found at Oversly Farm Cheshire, a site with evidence for either repeated occupation episodes or some degree of permanence in the Early Bronze Age (Garner *et al* 2007).

Although the evidence in the borderlands is rather meagre, some recurrent themes can be discerned regarding the nature and distribution of Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age 'settlement' activity. The digging of pits and deposition of cultural material, including Grooved Ware and Beakers, is not restricted to a specific type of site or topographical setting. This activity, with its origins in the earlier Neolithic continues into the Early Bronze Age and incorporates different ceramic traditions although this does not imply that the meanings behind such activities were the same across millennia. Many of the earlier excavation reports represent much of the material, particularly Beaker sherds, as domestic waste deposited in pits with little further comment. What is apparent is that only parts of vessels were placed within the pits which raises the question of where the rest of the pots end up. The ubiquitous spreads of material that often accompany these sites may provide the answer as we have seen at Four Crosses where matching sherds from pots were found in pits and dispersed nearby. It may be then that once a site's occupants move on, practices are enacted which require that some of the debris of daily life has to be deposited within the earth.

Examples have been drawn from a variety of topographic locations including hilltops, hillslopes and river valleys, but the recurring characteristic of these sites is that of a purposeful selection of places that have witnessed prior activity. This is not to necessarily suggest unbroken continuity of occupation but may point instead to repeated use of the same sites over generations. These locales would acquire meaning, perhaps marked in the landscape or remembered through stories, placenames and songs. The features beneath some barrows may be nothing more than fortuitously surviving examples but it is perhaps more likely that the barrows were placed where they were precisely because of these features and activity. They had obtained life stories, they had become places in the landscape, perhaps related to seasonal or other movements that had attained meaning through the practices that were enacted there, practices associated with elements of domestic life, eating,

sleeping and subsistence activities. All of these elements may have had a ritual element to them although Halstead (2005, 21) rejects the evidence from hilltops sites as that of domestic occupation, preferring to interpret them as representing episodes of ritual or ceremonial activity, though this distinction between ritual and domestic in the Early Bronze Age seems at odds with his preference for Brück's model of residential mobility. It is of course not to deny that ritual or ceremonial activities did take place in these locations but the relationship between dwellings, hearths, rituals, pits and material objects is so closely intertwined that to separate out these spheres into domestic /settlement and ritual / ceremonial aspects of life is difficult and probably futile. Thomas has recently argued that:

"...rather than actual everyday activity, many of the practices in which Grooved Ware was employed elaborated, magnified or dramatized the idea of the domestic. Feasting built upon the notion of the household sharing food and convivial relations; timber circles monumentalized the architecture of the house; pit deposits appropriated the aura of dwelling and the hearth and extended it across the entire landscape. But in no case was there an absolute separation of ritual from the everyday: each area of practice represented a continuum from the mundane to the spectacular. In a fluid, mobile, unstable society, the concept of the household provided a new and overarching metaphor for sociality, while the Grooved Ware complex provided a mechanism for social integration." (Thomas 2010, 12).

2.8 Metals and metalwork of the Early Metal Age in the borderlands

For all of its primacy within earlier studies of the Bronze Age, indeed the very name of the period, metalwork is relatively scarce. Many objects are stray finds with no context, association with burials are rare and repeat attention in the literature unduly focuses on such examples when they do occur. It has been suggested that the relatively low level of finds of Early Bronze Age metalwork may be explained by recycling (Needham 1989, 385). Indeed, Ixer and Budd (1998) have shown that impurities in copper based metalwork are the result of mixing copper from different ore sources. For much of the history of study of metalwork, attention has been focused on establishing order and chronological perspective (see Barber 2003 for a history). Detailed typologies underpinned a cultural-historical viewpoint that saw the emergence of metallurgy as implicit in economic and social upheaval, whilst little thought was given to the circumstances of how the material entered the

archaeological record. Finds found in association were considered hoards of either a utilitarian or votive nature depending upon the likelihood of recovery, whilst single finds were considered accidental losses. That there is more complexity should not be surprising. The distinction between hoards and single finds has been challenged by Barrett and Needham (1988) who argued they share similarities and are different aspects of the same phenomena of deposition. Metalwork can be found in a variety of contexts, Needham (1988) adds mound deposits, henge associations, bog deposits and river contexts to the standard finds of single, funerary and hoards. Further, Needham (*ibid.*) found distinctions between the types of metal objects that could be considered suitable for certain types of deposition. Broadly, daggers, small tools and ornaments dominate grave assemblages whilst axes, halberds and spearheads are more likely to be found in hoards. These associations for Needham had particular significances for contemporary society. The grave sets could be viewed as symbols of power and status but were used sparingly for the most part, perhaps providing the reason for miniaturisation of some types. Of course exceptions are always possible, the well-furnished assemblage from Bush Barrow (Needham *et al* 2010) and the gold cape from a barrow at Mold (Powell 1953) alert us to the range of customs and practices afforded those buried beneath barrows, although such 'rich' or well-furnished graves are a regional phenomena. The relative poverty of most graves with regard to metal is in direct contrast to hoards, and for this Needham (1988) suggests they may represent deposits by, or on behalf, of a community.

Within the study area there has been sporadic interest over the years, mostly representing catalogues and details of finds such as those recorded by Chitty (e.g. Chitty 1926, 1928, 1940a, 1940b) for Shropshire and occasionally the Welsh Marches. Recent interest in the depositional patterning across landscapes that situates metalwork into a broader perspective has been provided by Mullin (2003) and Halstead (2005). The majority of Early Bronze Age metalwork found in the borderlands are single finds and recovered from locations associated with water, namely small streams and tributaries at altitudes below 122m (Halstead 2005, 27). Halstead (*ibid.* 27) cites examples of flat axes found in valley contexts close to rivers at Ironbridge, Shropshire; Trederwen, Powys; Monmouth and Clunbury, Shropshire. To this could be added the flat axes from the banks of the Severn at Bevere Island and Kidderminster Foreign, both Worcestershire, although the latter example may have been associated with a burial (Smith 1957, 17-8). A peculiarity of the nature of metalwork deposition in the study area is the lack of finds in rivers. Many rivers have

high levels of deposition yet barely any metalwork has been found in the Severn and none at all in the Wye (Mullin 2012). Mullin (ibid, 52) has argued that the low levels of deposition in the Severn cannot be accounted for by taphonomic and recovery regimes, and suggests instead that that metal was treated differently in this region, a pattern noted by Bradley (1990, 139) for other rivers that flow west into the Irish Sea. There is some variation to the pattern for deposition in lowland valleys; in Denbighshire and Flintshire, the preference seems to be for the higher ground of the Clwydian Hills rather than the Vale of Clwyd (Halstead 2005, 27). A landslip in 1962 on the sloping ground of Moel Arthur hillfort, Clwyd, situated at 440m AOD revealed a hoard of three flat copper axes apparently deposited very close to the surface (Forde-Johnston 1964). These axes are the earliest examples of metalwork within the study area, of Irish design and probably Irish copper, although it is unknown in what state of completeness they entered Wales (Northover 1980, 232).



Figure 15: Axe from Titterstone Clee, Shropshire in 1889 (©Shrewsbury Museum Services)

Another axe of Irish origin, a bronze flanged axe was found within 2 or 3 metres of a bronze flat axe (Fig 15) on Titterstone Clee Hill, Shropshire, a hill that rises to 500m AOD (Chitty 1926). The flat axe was found embedded in soft earth between two large blocks of basalt during the construction of a road. It is unclear from the account of the precise context of the flanged axe, “The second bronze celt was found within 2 or 3 yards and about the same level, in company with a boar’s tusk and a portion of tooth

showing the grinding surface” (ibid. 236). The only other Early Bronze age hoard in the study area comes from a lowland context, that of the Ebnal Hoard of the Arreton tradition (Britton 1963; Burgess and Cowen 1972) (Needhams Phase 4) at c.1750-1500 cal BC). Found in a ditch in the late nineteenth century near Oswestry, Shropshire, the hoard consisted of two ogival daggers of Camerton-Snowhill form, one end looped spearhead, two tools described as punches, an Arreton flanged axe and two other possibly similar axes (since lost). Early Bronze Age hoards are small and relatively simple compared to the large and varied hoards of later periods but their composition can still suggest something of the place of the Marches in wider networks. The dagger and axe types in the Ebnal hoard have a largely eastern distribution but the spearhead is of a type mostly found in the west, particularly Ireland (Burgess and Cowen 1972). This of course does not suggest that all such early items were imports; a mould for flat axes was recovered from a stream at Longden Common, Shropshire (Thomas 1972) and local copper ores were also exploited.

Halstead (2005, 29-30) considers the possibility of the hilltop finds as perhaps indicative of disturbed grave goods, but suggests that their relative distance from funerary monuments and settlement is more likely to represent specific events intentionally removed from such sites. Mullin (2003, 96) disagrees and suggests that the deposition of axes away from the burial of the body, yet in the vicinity, may indicate an extended burial rite. In either case it is interesting to note that the ‘axe only’ hoards came from upland locations and the mixed hoard from a lowland setting, a factor that cannot be explained by chronology. Burgess ascribes the flanged axe from Titterstone Clee Hill as of the Derryniggin type, contemporary with Arreton (Burgess and Cowen 1972, 179).

Although the populations of the borderlands may have taken their stylistic cues from further afield this was not a one sided relationship, at least as far as raw materials were concerned. Copper ore can be found extensively in north and mid-Wales and Cheshire, as can gold, albeit in more limited quantities. Although copper occurs naturally in the borderlands, metallurgy appears to be an introduction to Britain conventionally placed at c.2450-2400, the addition of tin to produce bronze coming after c.2300 BC (Parker Pearson 2009, 104). Copper was extracted at Ross Island in Ireland after 2400 cal BC, later in Britain, but the main period of mining in Wales falls within a 300 year period covering the centuries between 1900-1600 cal BC with only Great Orme continuing into the later Bronze Age (Timberlake 2001, 179-80). The

identification of Bronze Age copper mines has largely resulted from the discovery of stone tools in association with the evidence for technologically primitive extraction processes (O'Brien 1996, 6). At least thirty probable or definite copper mining sites have been identified within the British Isles (Ixer and Budd 1998, 16), the majority found within mid and north Wales and south-west Ireland. Although the only known insular sources of tin, used in the production of the alloy bronze, are in Cornwall the sites of extraction have yet to be found.

Mines on the periphery of the study area with reliable dating evidence include the extensive workings at Great Orme, Llandudno on the north Wales coast and one of the largest mines in northwest Europe (Dutton et al. 1994), Copa Hill, Cwmstwyth (Timberlake 1990) and Nantyeira (Timberlake 1988;1990) and two sites in England, Alderley Edge Cheshire (Garner *et al* 1994; Timberlake and Prag 2005), and Ecton, Staffordshire (Barnatt and Thomas 1998). Although there are as yet no dated examples of Bronze Age mining within the study area, there are some possibilities. A partially used hammerstone of vein quartz was found within rubble close to the blocked lower entrance of Ogof copper mine on Llanymynech Hill, Powys, a mine known to be in use in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC (Timberlake 1996). It is entirely probable that the extraction of copper was much more widespread, later activity tending to destroy or mask much earlier workings, but equally, some areas with rich and accessible seams were ignored (Timberlake 2001, 182). One possible reason for this may lie in the relationship with the landscape. Barber (2003, 106) draws parallels with 'axe factories' and suggests that some mines may have been selected over others due to their prominence in a landscape already rich in meaning and this would enhance the value of the material extracted.

The extent of the surviving remains can lead to assumptions of large-scale exploitation but this may not necessarily be the case, as it is more likely the outcome of longer term small scale activity (Barber 2003). Mining and prospection could be incorporated into the seasonal round of a mobile population and Timberlake (2001, 184) has highlighted the lack of settlement evidence and cruder workings at mines in mid-Wales in comparison to Great Orme where mining may have been the main or sole activity for some of the population.

Mining activities within the British Isles seem to come to a temporary cessation around 1500 BC, the Early-Middle Bronze Age transition (Timberlake 2001, 189). The

reasons for this hiatus are not clear but there were probably many interconnected factors; the exhaustion of the more accessible deposits, climatic deterioration and the retreat from the uplands where the mines were located are concomitant with broad societal changes throughout Britain at this time.

2.9 Burnt Mounds

An aspect of the occupation record of the late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age that is often overlooked is that of burnt mounds. They are found in concentrations throughout the north and west of the British Isles but their greatest numbers are in the northern isles of Scotland, southern Ireland and south-west Wales (Hedges 1975, 62). Although commonly thought of as a later Bronze Age phenomena they have a history that extends back to the Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age (Fig 16 and see Brindley *et al* 1989 for a full discussion of British and Irish dates). There are few mounds within the study area, but their curious relative paucity and possible Early Bronze age date necessitates their inclusion as evidence of occupation.

Burnt mounds are characterised by accumulations of burnt and heat shattered stones and charcoal, often kidney shaped in plan. Excavation usually reveals stone, timber or clay lined rectangular troughs and hearths, and this, allied with their location close to water, indicates a technology for heating water with heated stones (Barfield and Hodder 1987). Although it is generally agreed that burnt mound sites were utilised in water heating, the reasons for this are less clear. The long established interpretation that the sites were places to cook meat (O'Kelly 1954) was challenged by Barfield and Hodder (1987) who argued that the lack of food debris and their location outside of settlements suggested an alternative function. Instead they argue the troughs were used to create steam to be used in saunas or bathing, although this has by no means been accepted as their primary purpose (Drisceoil 1988).

The earliest use of burnt mounds suggests origins in Scotland and West Wales. A burnt mound at Kilmartin, Argyll dates to 2800-2400 cal BC (Anthony *et al* 2001) whilst radiocarbon dating from sites at Carne A and Carne B at Fishguard, Pembrokeshire, and Felin Fulbrook, Cerdigion, suggest a period of usage during the late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age with dates clustered around c. 2500-2000 cal BC . To the east it would seem that the technology was not embraced until the Middle Bronze Age. Dates from sites that include Rodway, Shropshire 1310-1170 cal BC

(Hannaford 1999) the many sites in the West Midlands c.1500-1000 (Barfield and Hodder 1989) and a more recent example at Clifton Quarry (1410-1300 to 1370-1250 cal BC (Mann & Jackson, forthcoming) adhere to the more typical Middle Bronze Age period, although Impressed Wares at a burnt mound at Willington, Derbyshire suggests possible earlier isolated take-up of the practice (Beamish and Ripper 2000).

There are few known mounds within the study area. Eastern Wales is mostly devoid of this site type, the Welsh SMR records just three possible sites within the study area, all at the extreme west. However, concentrations lie on the very eastern edge of the study area along the River Parry in the Shropshire wetlands (Leah *et al* 1998, 137-52). A further concentration, slightly further east lies within the West Midlands (Barfield and Hodder 1989). These distributions of sites to some degree reflect patterns of fieldwork. The concentrations in Shropshire have benefitted from the North West Wetlands Survey (Leah *et al* 1998) whilst those in the West Midlands were largely identified due to the work of Michael Nixon from 1950-1980 and then a systematic search by Barfield and Hodder (1989) in the 1980's. The reason for this absence within the study area is unclear although the lack of discovery of new sites following the recent surveys by the archaeological trusts, particularly in areas where one might reasonably expect to find burnt mounds, suggests that the absence may be real rather than illusory. With these early and late concentrations to the west and east respectively, and a gap within the study area, it seems likely that the peoples of the borderlands chose not to utilise the technology associated with burnt mounds. However we cannot assume that those within the study area, or indeed any that are discovered in the future, are Middle or Late Bronze Age sites based on morphology alone.

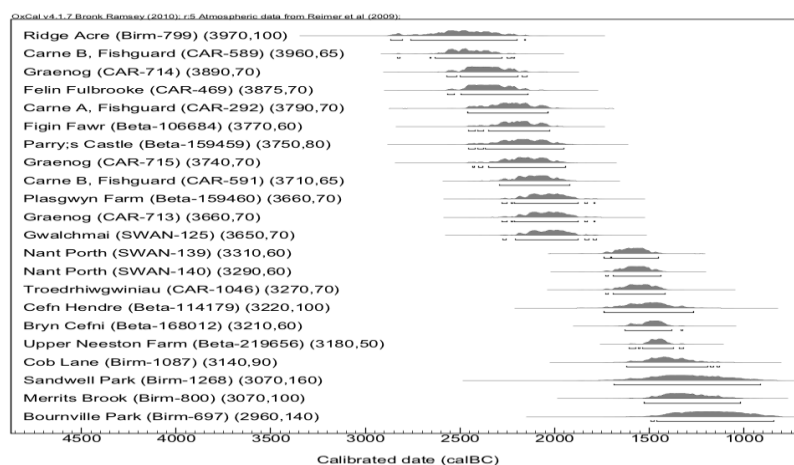


Figure 16: radiocarbon dates of burnt mounds (Brindley *et al* 1989)

2.10 Summary

By reviewing the evidence for the social practices of communities in the borderlands in the period prior to, and including, the Early Bronze Age, it is clear that there are still deep uncertainties as to the nature of aspects of social life during this time. The evidence for settlement in the sense of a '*settled*', i.e. a bounded, sedentary population with permanent substantial architecture, is non-existent, a pattern that is replicated across much of southern Britain (Brück 1999). The surface finds of lithic and ceramic material often provide little beyond overall distributions of occupation activity and may in many cases represent task specific sites. There are no field systems and the few structures that might be interpreted as houses are ephemeral and seem more suited to temporary usage. The three Late Neolithic structures described earlier provide the only evidence for some form of shelter, regardless of their ascribed functions, for well over a thousand years in the borderlands. The deposition of material culture in pits, again often interpreted as the residue of domestic life, is little understood, although the practice appears to transcend the mundane in some instances. This is an important point which will be revisited in a later chapter as there can often be little to substantially distinguish between the pits and deposits at notional settlement sites with those found at some round barrows. The introduction of Beakers to the region seems to have had little visible impact on settlement practices. Indeed, Burgess considers the introduction of metal and Beakers as a 'gloss on existing institutions' (Burgess 1980) and it could be argued that the deposition of Beakers in pits provides evidence of continuity rather than change. Similarly, for all of its novelty, metal seems to have been treated in a similar manner to stone in many ways such as the deposition of hoards for example.

Whilst previously thought of as nomadic or transhumant populations, the evidence from the borderlands would suggest that, much like other parts of the country, it is more likely that some form of temporary occupancy, which Brück (1999) terms residential mobility, was practiced. Under this model the subsistence economy was broad based with differential access to grazing and cultivation areas, operated at a community rather than familial level. A sense of place therefore was not restricted to a permanent domestic dwelling but was manifested through a range of occupational practices across a wider landscape.

This chapter began with an acknowledgement that much of the evidence that constitutes our knowledge, and thus our models, of society during the Early Bronze

Age is derived from the excavation of round barrows. Whilst this is being addressed to some degree, the paucity of other sources of evidence in the borderlands requires that round barrows are looked upon anew, not just as receptacles for the dead, but as repositories of information on the social life of the period.

Chapter 3: Round barrows in the borderlands; distribution and morphology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter forms the foundation from which the analysis of round barrows and associated monuments and structures is derived. Its aim is to examine the nature of the evidence for round barrows within the Anglo-Welsh borderland from existing records and it is intended that this macro scale examination will provide the starting point for more detailed and nuanced analyses in succeeding chapters. It is primarily concerned with identifying the range of morphological characteristics of round barrows, their distribution and broad landscape settings. It will provide an overview of both the extant and lost barrows and other forms of evidence within a landscape context that encompasses the two distinct topographic zones that encompass the study area.

The chapter is divided into 5 parts the first of which forms this introduction. The second part will detail the methodology for this part of the study and introduce the range of data and its sources and provide critical commentary on the reliability of these sources. The third part will provide a macro scale overview of the broad topographic distribution of round barrows, possible biases in the record and discuss factors affecting their survival and destruction. The fourth part details an examination of the morphological characteristics of the evidence and considers the usefulness of the classifications and terminology used for round barrows in the borderlands. The final part will conclude the chapter with a summary and set the scene for the succeeding chapters which will proceed from this broad macro analysis to the meso and micro elements of the study.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Sources of data

In the first instance a database of round barrow and round cairn sites was constructed using existing data held by the various Historic Environment Records (HER) for the

counties of the study area (Table 1). Requests for the data from the HER's were framed to be wide ranging and inclusive in an attempt to retrieve all of the possible records despite the ambiguity inherent in some of the classifications. The initial request was for all Neolithic and Early Bronze Age funerary structures, monuments, inhumations, cremations, ring ditches, cists, and also associated Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age and Bronze Age monuments such as stone circles and standing stones. The problems of classification became apparent as not all ring ditches were initially picked up by the HER searches.

Ring ditches are not listed under the Religious Ritual and Funerary (RRF) monument class under the NMR (National Monuments Record) monument type thesaurus and although broad searches will capture some of the records, the vagaries of monument descriptions by the various HER record compilers means that some ring ditches have been 'dated' as Bronze Age or Neolithic, or at least prehistoric. Others remain as undated and so are less visible in some HER searches. For example, this resulted in 83 undated ring ditches being added to the total number in Herefordshire alone.

Data from the HER's were requested in two formats; the text records and the geospatial data which was retrieved from the GIS (Geographical Information System) systems in use by the different counties. The geospatial data was supplied in two proprietary GIS formats; shp and .mpf files utilised by ArcGIS and MapInfo GIS systems respectively. The MapInfo files were converted into .shp file format to allow use within ArcGIS. The GIS files from each county were merged into one larger file to ensure standardisation but also to facilitate ease of use.

The quality and extent of the data supplied differed considerably between the counties. The GIS data supplied by CPAT was extensive with many different attributes assigned to each record whereas those from the English counties were varied, in some cases consisting of little more than co-ordinate data and SMR (Sites and Monument Record) number only. This disparity in part reflects the work undertaken by the Religious, Ritual and Funerary (RRF) projects conducted by the Welsh archaeological trusts (Gibson 2002; Lynch 2002; 2003; Jones 2004; 2007) and the subsequent updating of the HER records. Additionally a series of surveys initiated and funded by RCAHMW under the Uplands Archaeology initiative (Silvester 2003) have added many new sites and reported on the condition of existing sites, the results of which have been incorporated into the HER.

The location of new sites is an ongoing process and where possible these have been incorporated into the database.

Supplemental to the HER records, a number of other sources were consulted (Table 1). These were especially useful when seemingly conflicting or confusing information was presented in the HER records. The transcribed aerial survey data from the Marches Uplands Mapping Project (MUMP - Stoertz 2004) was supplied as geospatially referenced mapping tiles which were viewed using the GIS. By comparing the known sites supplied by the HER's against the MUMP tiles, sites were identified which had not been supplied as part of the HER GIS files.

Table 1: Sources utilised in database construction

Primary archival sources for database construction

Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) HER
Herefordshire HER
Shropshire HER
Worcestershire HER

Supplemental sources for additions and cross checks

National Monuments Record (NMR) England
Coflein – National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW)
Marches Uplands Mapping Project (MUMP)
Grinsell (1993) Herefordshire Barrows
Ellis Davies (1929; 1949) the prehistoric and Roman remains of Denbighshire and Flintshire

3.2.2 Results of initial search

The initial search and request for data returned over 2600 records. The nature of the initial requests meant that in many cases any record which had Bronze Age in the record was provided. This was reduced down to 2110 records which at this time also included stone circles and standing stones. These records were subtracted from the main database and were not included in the overall analysis. Placenames suggestive of barrows, cairns and standing stones accounted for 244 records and are discussed further below. In some instances multiple barrows and ring ditches were contained within a single record. Where enough information exists, the monuments within these records have been split providing new records whilst retaining the original Primary Record Number (PRN; the prefix used by the HER's for individual site numbers). The final figure of sites used in this analysis stands at 1608. This is not to say that all of these records can be confidently interpreted as representing a round barrow or cairn; the levels of confidence in these assignments are detailed in the summaries below.

3.2.3 Data reliability

The raw HER data was analysed and assessed for inclusion in the analysis. The reliability of the data was examined to some extent but analysis could only be conducted where a degree of certainty was evident (Fig 17). The absolute certainty that any given mound or cairn represents a prehistoric round barrow is untenable without excavation and thus much of the identification and classification necessarily relies upon analogy. This is of course an obvious and accepted caveat to field archaeology but there are some problems with the database as it stands. The HER databases primarily record information as passed to it in various forms over the years. These records necessarily record sites in good faith and will often keep subsequently refuted sites on its database as a historical record which can prove problematic to macro scale research. In an effort to account for this, all of the unexcavated circular mounded monuments, regardless of form or construction, were defined by the level of confidence attributed to them. Degrees of confidence in the attribution of the site as a round barrow are described by the suffixes probable, possible and doubtful (Figure 17). Where it has been shown categorically that the record for the barrow is erroneous, these have been removed from the database. Examples of this type include duplicate sites that have been given different PRN numbers only to be subsequently shown to be the same sites. Where there is some slight possibility that such a site existed, the records remain in the database and are classified as doubtful.

For the most part the degrees of confidence are related to former fieldworker's comments and the dialogue that exists within certain HER records. For example some barrows were dismissed by early fieldworkers because of their positions in the landscape such as those positioned on floodplains, yet examples will be provided of proven sites which potentially negate such arguments. The reliability of fieldworkers has also been taken into account, particularly on sites that have since disappeared. The Reverend Ellis Davies is generally regarded as a reliable observer by later fieldworkers for instance, but the Shropshire OS correspondent A.J. Bird perhaps less so. An example of the type of record excluded from this database is the identification of a presumed barrow that Bird identified from a neighbouring summit with no ground truthing and subsequently found to be a natural feature. Fieldwork, particularly by later CPAT workers has led to the dismissal of many of his sites (source: data from HER entries).

Where minor elements of doubt exist, the records are considered as possible, whilst those termed doubtful have major elements of doubt attached to them. The reasons for categorising as doubtful are detailed below. It should be noted that this category does not necessarily mean the sites are not round barrows, but rather they may be unsubstantiated, provide very little detail or have yet to be refuted or affirmed by other workers.

1. Unsubstantiated reports. These are the reports entered onto the record which have very little detail, often no more than the sighting of a mound from a distance. Generally there are no dimensions or other description.
2. Visited but subsequently unlocated. These are those sites which generally have little detail associated with them and have entered the record but have not been located by subsequent fieldworkers. This may be the result of many factors such as erroneous grid references by the originator or subsequent destruction.
3. Misidentification. A strong element of doubt has been voiced by later fieldworkers as to the identification of the feature as a round barrow. This may refer to stony prominences largely covered by vegetation which appear to be natural rocky outcrops or features which are more likely to be fluvio-glacial in origin.

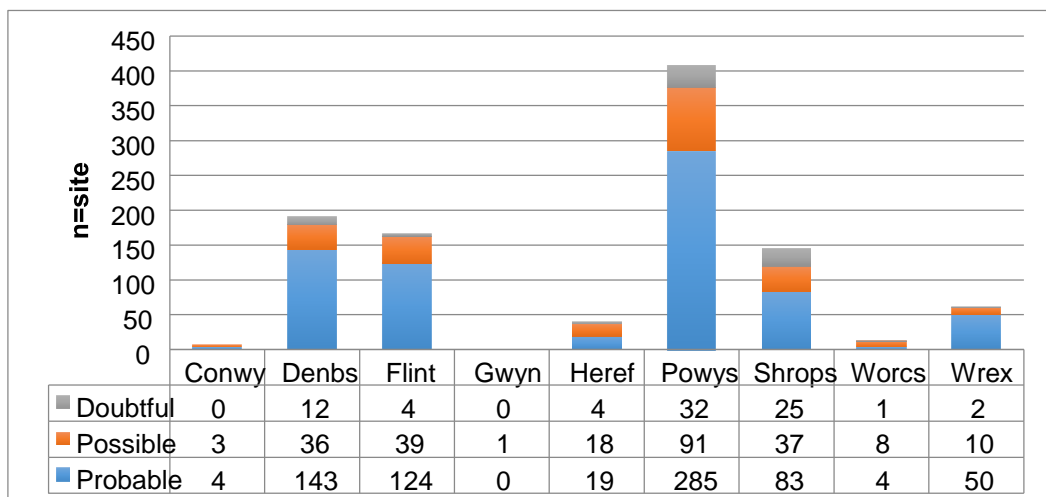


Figure 17: Levels of confidence for round barrow data

3.2.4 Database format

The template for the database is partly modelled on the geospatial database supplied by CPAT as this is a comprehensive resume of the known information for each site. To this end every English record had to be scrutinised and a value given for each missing attribute where possible.

Standardisation was a problem between the counties data. The site type as defined by the HER's varied considerably and were numerous, with many variations on a theme and thus an attempt at simple standardisation was introduced. Whilst it is acknowledged that this may be seen as reductive, in reality the types utilised by the HER's were subjective with different criteria seemingly applied to very similar monuments. Round barrows were classified in a variety of ways; for example some barrows were termed 'Round Barrow (Large)', whilst others of similar dimensions were not. Similarly the term structured cairns, that is cairns showing some evidence of internal cohesion in their structure, was used for a small amount of monuments, yet many other records could easily have satisfied the apparent criteria but were not classified as such. Many attributes were thus standardised, the details of which can be found below. The use of standardised keywords enabled the generation of a series of explanatory charts which although by definition seemingly mask complexity, allowed for some broad quantitative analysis. The elements that make some barrows distinctive, such as ditches and banks, were given in other attribute fields. This division of attributes removes many of the multiple barrow classifications (of which there were over 30 that were used across the various HER databases) but retains their distinctive features. The database thus consists of a field and its attributes and a full explanation of these are given in the appendix.

3.3 The distribution of funerary sites

3.3.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the distribution of sites with regard to administrative and topographical considerations. Within this dataset the evidence can be further divided to provide a more comprehensive overview and permits some broad analysis with regard to patterns of survival and destruction. A summary of the data is provided in Table 2.

3.3.2 Administrative and topographic distribution of round barrows

The study area covers an area of approximately 8,913 km² unequally divided between modern unitary counties. This has resulted in some counties contributing a larger share of the study area than others, although the division between Welsh and English area coverage is relatively equal, being 48% and 52% respectively (Fig 18). Within this area there are 1608 sites which can be separated into five broad categories of funerary evidence: barrows and cairns, ring ditches, burials, cists and cremation cemeteries (Fig 19). Before moving on to examine these categories in detail, the distribution of the sites across the study area will be briefly examined.

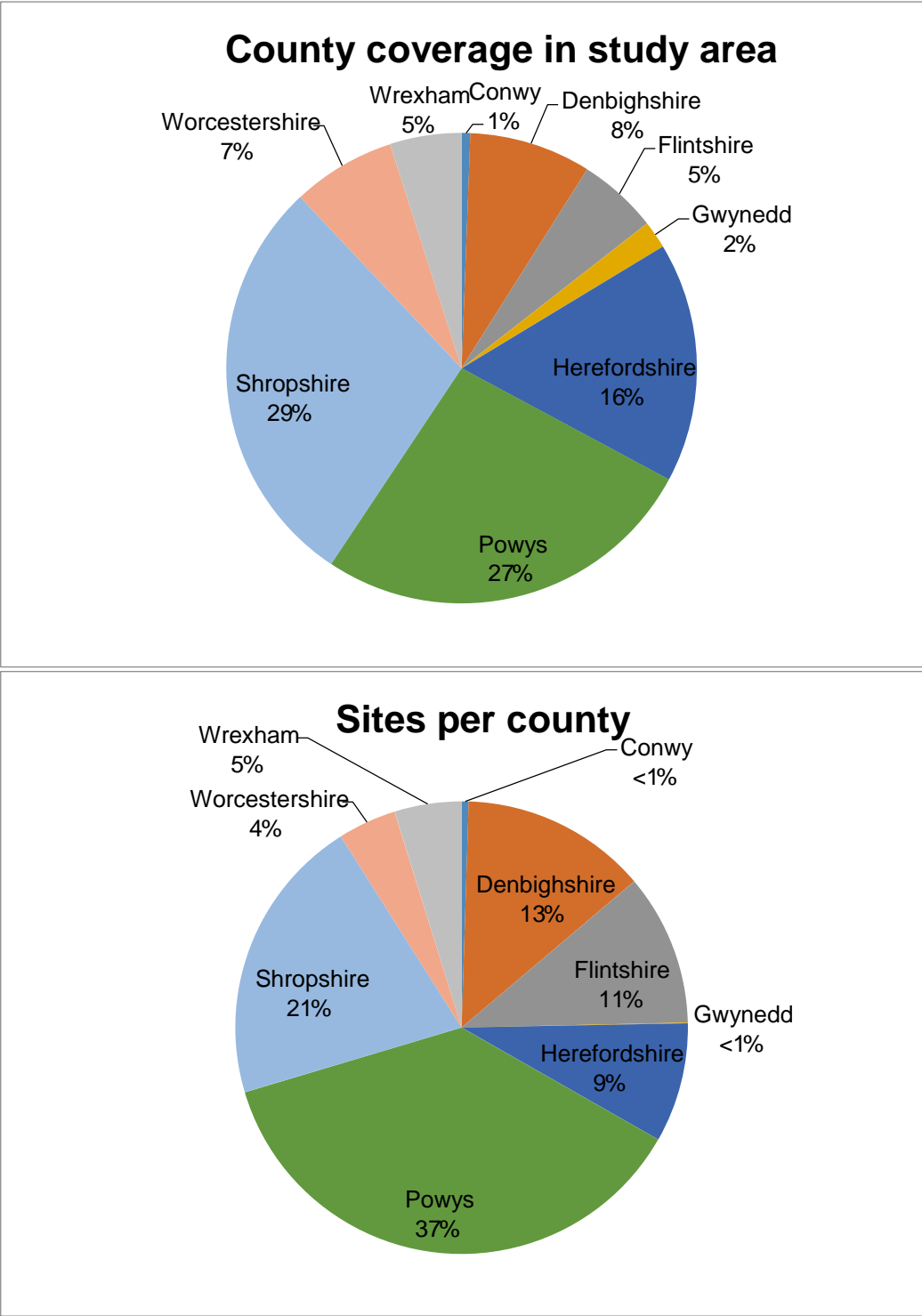


Figure 18: Distribution of counties (above) and sites (below) across the study area

Table 2: Summary of principal data

	Conwy	Denb	Flint	Gwyn	Herefs	Powys	Shrops	Worcs	Wrex	Totals
Area coverage (km ²)	53	745	489	169	1471	2363	2551	634	438	8913
Percentage of sites in the study area	<1	13	11	<1	9	37	21	4	5	100
Percentage of area in the study area	1	8	5	2	16	27	29	7	5	100
Total number of sites	8	214	174	1	138	597	332	67	77	1608
Density (sites per km ²)	0.15	0.29	0.36	0.01	0.09	0.25	0.13	0.11	0.18	15
Barrows and cairns	7	191	167	1	42	408	145	13	62	1036
Ring Ditches	0	13	5	0	93	175	181	53	9	529
Burials	0	4	2	0	0	2	4	1	2	15
Cists	1	6	0	0	3	12	0	0	4	26
Cremation cemetery	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Nature of site: Cropmark	0	13	5	0	95	174	183	53	9	532
Nature of site: Document	6	53	48	1	11	102	31	6	18	276
Nature of site: Earthwork	2	148	121	0	31	320	118	8	50	798
Nature of site: Geophysical	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Probable round barrows	4	143	124	0	19	285	83	4	50	712
Possible round barrows	3	36	39	1	18	91	37	8	10	243
Doubtful round barrows	0	12	4	0	4	32	25	1	2	80
Excavations	4	23	29	0	11	51	27	7	13	165

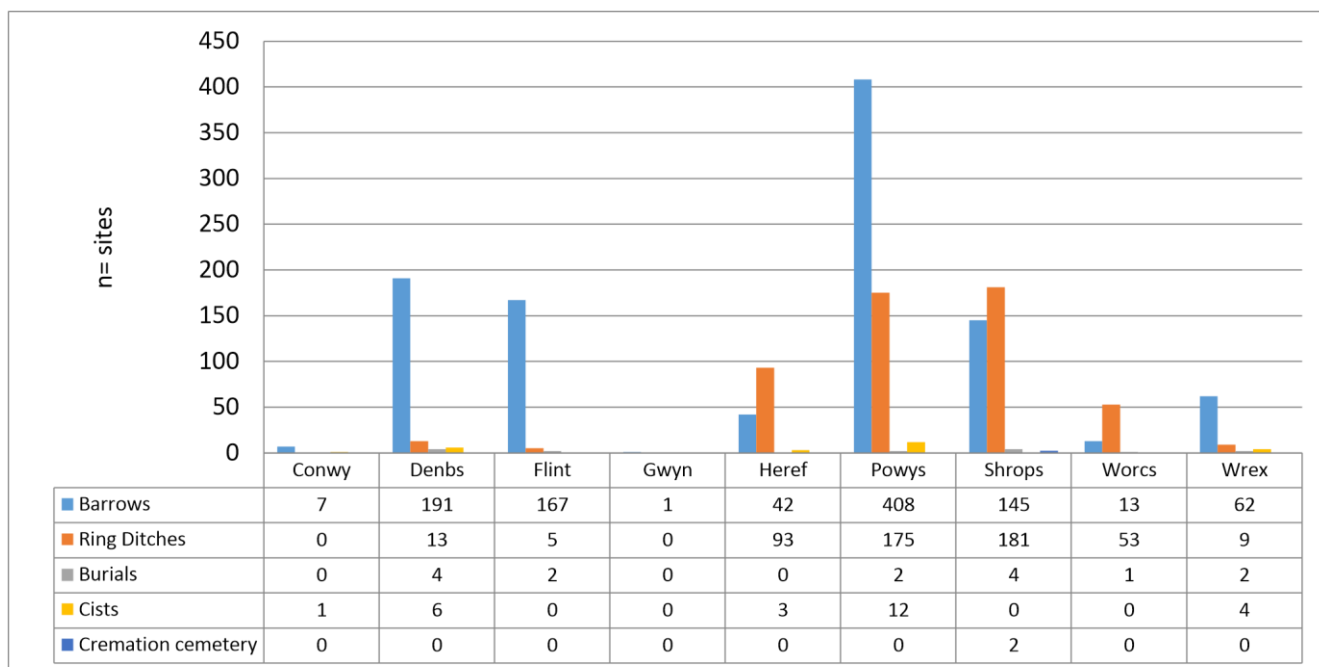


Figure 19: Broad categories of evidence by county

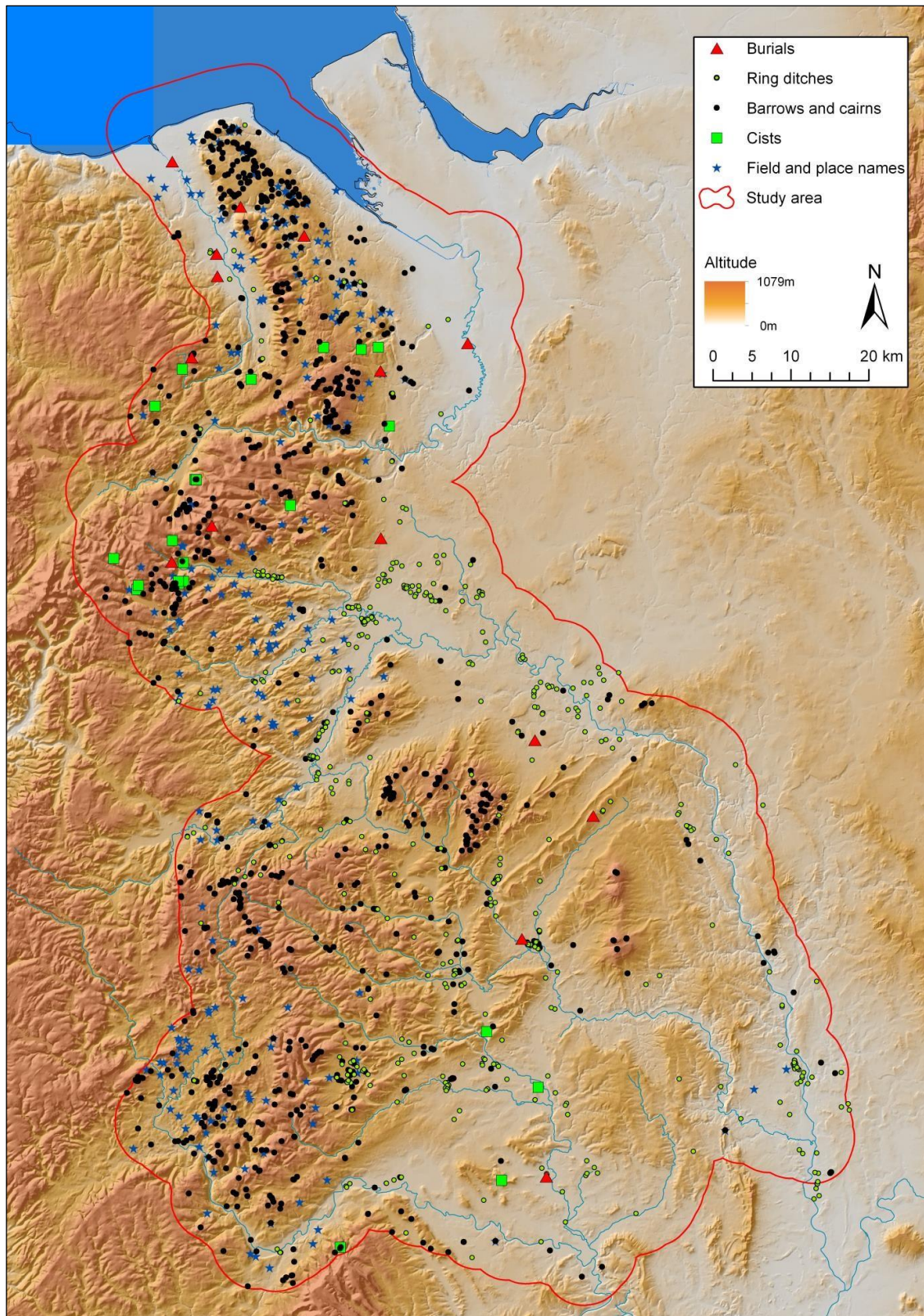


Figure 20: Distribution of broad categories within the borderlands

The distribution of sites across the counties is shown in Table 2 and figure 20. It is clear that although the land to the west of the modern Anglo-Welsh border accounts for a slightly smaller percentage of the study area as a whole, there are many more

sites in the Welsh counties with 67% of the total number of sites. A more detailed picture is gained from examining the relative frequency of sites and the density of sites per county.

Figure 21 shows that the Welsh counties have a higher density of sites than those from east of the border. However this chart is slightly misleading as it appears that Conwy is a county particularly rich in Early Bronze Age funerary sites and Gwynedd is relatively poor. The size of the area covered by Conwy and Gwynedd is so small in comparison to the other counties that a small concentration of sites can skew the results. By comparing the relative frequency of sites plotted against the percentage of the study area the counties cover, a slightly different picture emerges and the contribution, both in terms of area and the number of sites the counties of Gwynedd and Conwy supply to the study can be discerned (Fig 22). It is clear then from both charts that although the counties east of the border account for over half of the study area, they only contribute just over a third of the total number of documented sites.

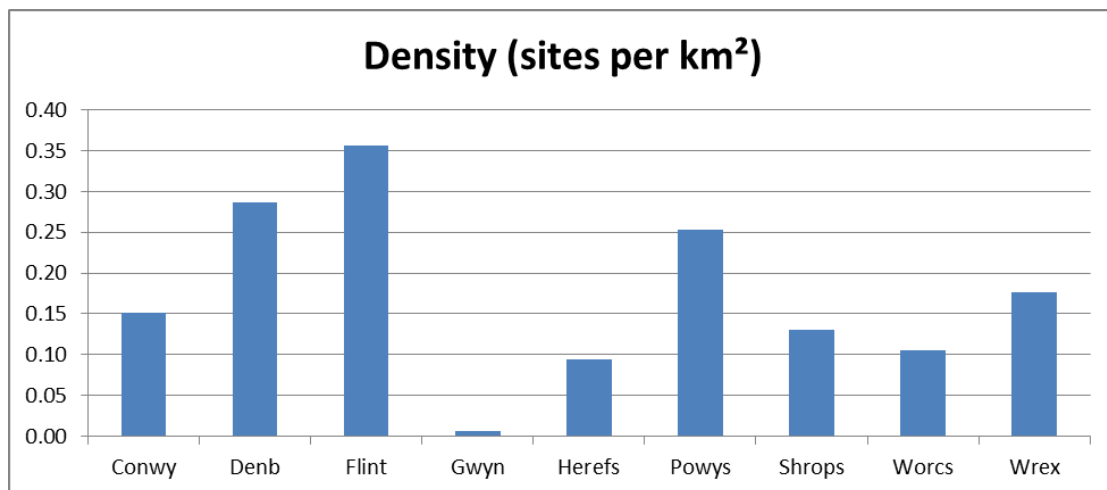


Figure 21: Density of sites within the study area

Although examining the divisions of land and sites across the counties may seem little more than an administrative exercise, there is some value to it. The bias in the distribution record needs to be studied to determine whether the distribution is real or a result of other factors. To examine this disparity, a number of other factors must be considered including the types of evidence available, the nature of the landscape and modern and historical land use within the study area, and the bias within historical and modern archaeological interest.

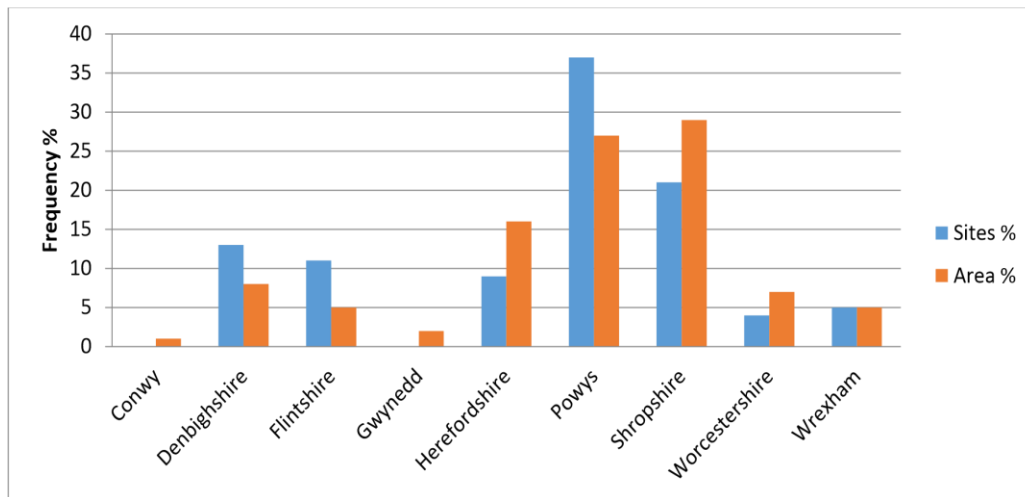


Figure 22: relationship of site frequency and area coverage by county

3.3.3 Types of evidence

Each of the five types of funerary evidence mentioned above can be further categorized by the nature of the evidence and the origin of the site record (Fig 23). On this basis it is possible to classify cropmark, documentary and geophysical sources as representing destroyed or lost sites and this, in essence, provides a record, albeit somewhat incomplete, of survival and destruction of round barrows.

An explanation of the categories is provided below:

- Earthwork – The site was an extant earthwork visible at the last known visit as recorded by the HER or by the author
- Cropmark – The site is visible as identified by cropmarks from aerial photographs and / or field visits (hereafter the term cropmarks is also used to incorporate soilmarks and parchmarks)
- Document – the site is now only known from documentary sources and incorporates sites either lost or destroyed. The detail varies, some sites only being known to modern researchers through historical texts, others are the result of destruction through modern excavation.
- Geophysics – the site has been identified by geophysical survey only

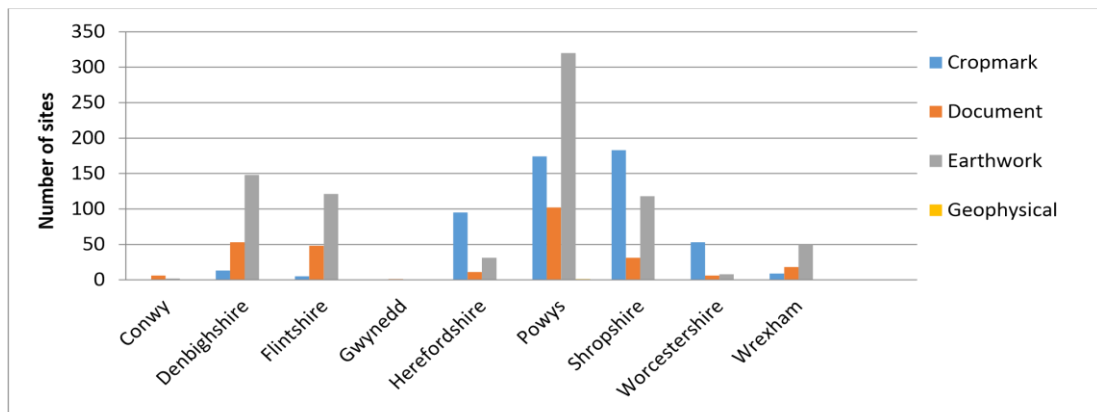


Figure 23: nature of the evidence by county

It is immediately apparent that as well as having the largest number of sites of all types, the counties to the west of the border account for the majority of the extant barrows. By contrast, the principal form of evidence for all of the English counties is that of cropmarks. The only site listed in the database which appears to be known only from geophysical survey is that of a semi-circular positive anomaly (PRN 70709) detected in the vicinity of large ring ditch cemetery at Four Crosses, Powys. The remaining class is that of documentary evidence and here again the majority of sites are from the western counties. Taken together with the cropmark evidence this provides some indication of the levels of destruction and survival. By taking the HER records at face value it would appear that the number of cropmarks or documentary records (809) is almost equal to that of extant sites (798). Put another way, if it is accepted that ring ditches are likely to represent the ploughed out remains of round barrows (see later in this chapter for a discussion on this subject), then just over half of the known sites in the study area have been destroyed, and proportionally most of this destruction has occurred on the eastern side of the border.

There are several factors which must be considered to account for the imbalance in the dataset and these shall be considered below.

3.4 Topographic distribution of sites

The landscape of the study area is varied and encompasses broad plains, mature river valleys, rolling hills and high mountain ranges and this variation can be broadly divided into upland and lowland environments for the purposes of this chapter. Whilst this division may seem a modern, relatively arbitrary construct, it has a bearing on historical and modern land use, particularly with regard to agricultural regimes and their impact on barrow survival. The division between upland and lowland environments is unequal within the study area and Figure 24 shows that although the uplands account for just 28% of the total area, 43% of the sites are to be found there. A more detailed and nuanced analysis of the landscape settings of barrows is the

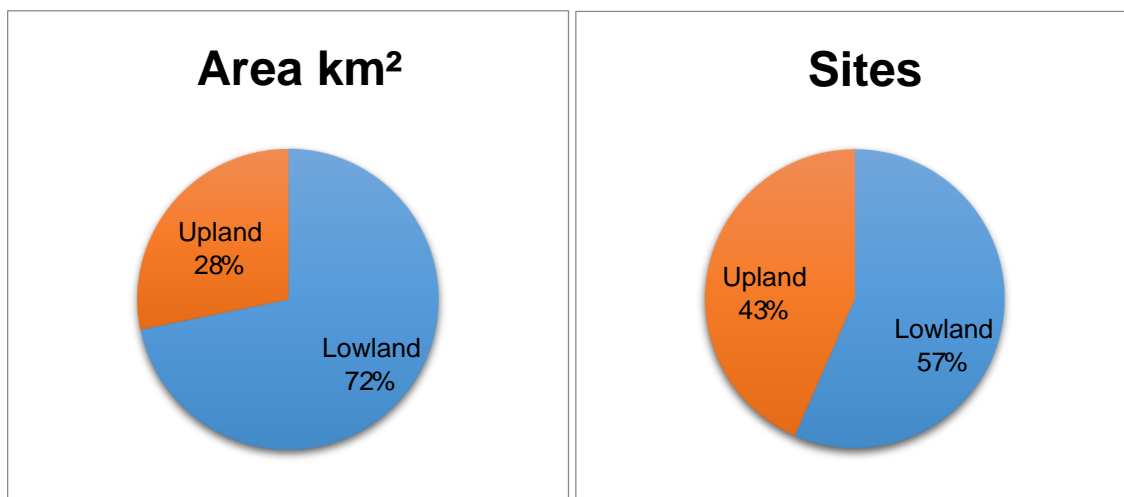


Figure 24: distribution of sites in relation to upland and lowland environments

subject of Chapter 4, but it is worth examining this rather generalised division of topography in a little more detail (Table 3). There is a broad range of altitudinal variation within the borderlands ranging from just above sea level to over 800m (Fig 25). There is a large peak at the 51-100m band and much of this is represented by the major broad river valleys, the Shropshire Plain and the Herefordshire Basin. The chart clearly shows that as altitude increases, its frequency within the study area declines. By comparison, the frequency of sites follows this altitudinal trend until reaching the 244m mark, the point at which the uplands are considered to begin, and here the trend is reversed and the number of sites begins to increase, reaching a peak in the 401-450m range before declining again (Figure 26). Converting the numerical values for area and sites into percentiles allows the data for altitude and sites to be directly plotted against each other and this is displayed in Figure 27. It clearly shows that a large number of sites are concentrated in the lowlands, and these

are mostly located along river valleys, and within a small band of upland between 300m and 500m.

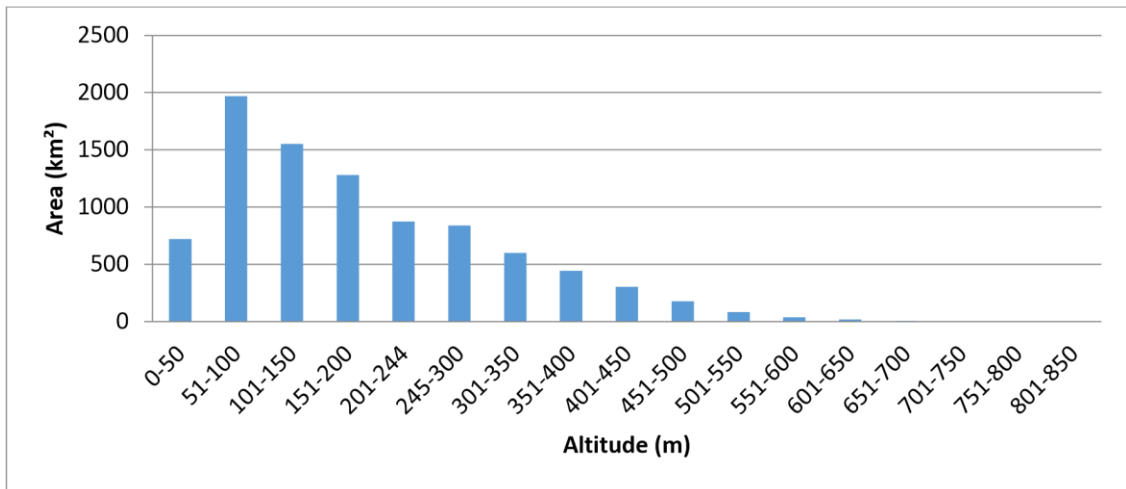


Figure 25: relationship between altitude and area coverage

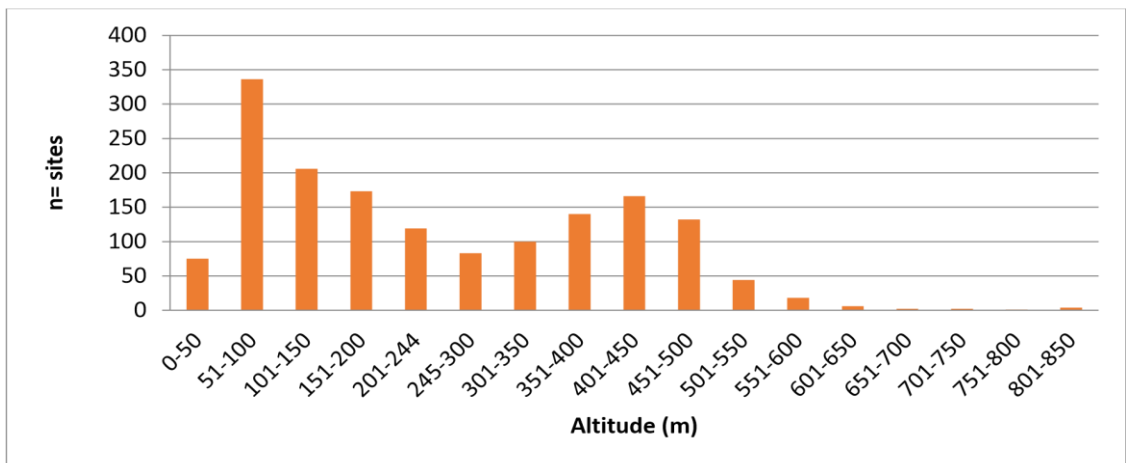


Figure 26: frequency of sites in relation to altitude

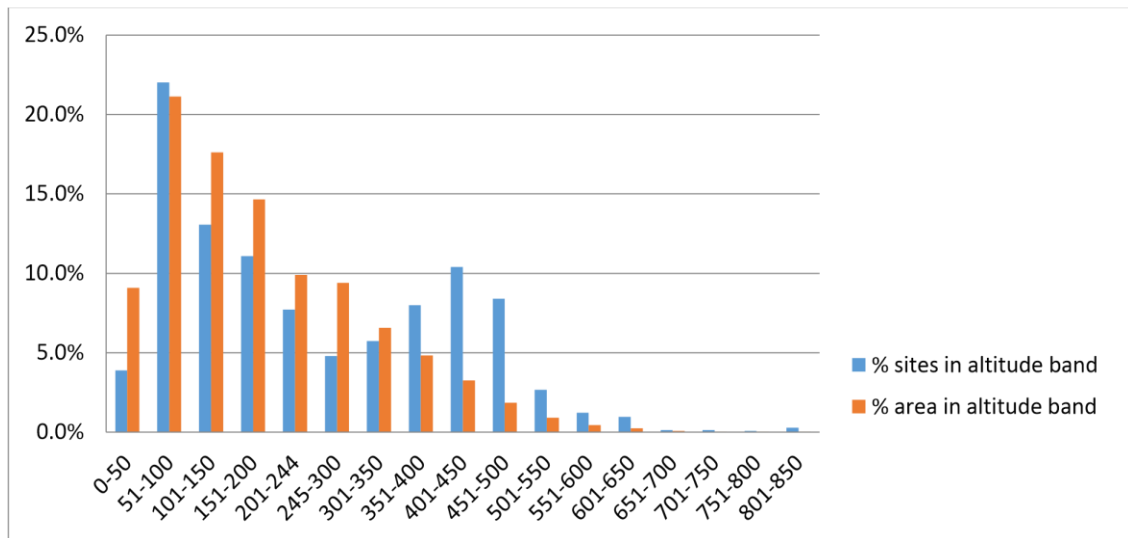


Figure 27: sites and area coverage as a percentage of the whole and plotted against altitude

Table 3: summary table of relationship of sites, area and altitude

Sites (N)	Altitude	Area (Km ²)	Density (sites per km ²)	% sites in altitude band	% area in altitude band
75	0-50	722	0.10	4.7%	8.10%
336	51-100	1968	0.17	20.9%	22.09%
206	101-150	1553	0.13	12.8%	17.43%
173	151-200	1280	0.14	10.8%	14.36%
119	201-244	875	0.14	7.4%	9.82%
83	245-300	840	0.10	5.2%	9.43%
100	301-350	599	0.17	6.2%	6.72%
140	351-400	443	0.32	8.7%	4.97%
166	401-450	305	0.54	10.3%	3.42%
132	451-500	176	0.75	8.2%	1.98%
44	501-550	84	0.52	2.7%	0.94%
18	551-600	37	0.48	1.1%	0.42%
6	601-650	19	0.32	0.4%	0.21%
2	651-700	6	0.31	0.1%	0.07%
2	701-750	2	0.98	0.1%	0.02%
1	751-800	1	0.81	0.1%	0.01%
4	801-850	>1	15.09	0.2%	0.00%
1608		8912		100.0%	100.00%

3.5 The distribution of extant and destroyed sites:

Analysis of the records contained within the HER's reveal the ratio between extant and destroyed sites in the study area is approximately equal (Table 4). What is apparent from these data is that the pattern of survival and destruction is not evenly distributed (Figure 28). The overwhelming majority of known destroyed and lost sites (80%) are to be found in the lowland zone, this zone accounting for just 33% of the total number of extant sites. It is evident then that that differential survival of barrows is directly related to position in the landscape. The eastern counties are primarily comprised of lowland environments and have the highest level of destruction whilst the western counties are primarily uplands and have larger number of extant sites.

Table 4: Relationship of extant and destroyed barrows to upland and lowland environments

	Conwy	Denbs	Flint	Gwyn	Heref	Powys	Shrops	Worcs	Wrex	Totals
Extant >244m	2	121	15	0	6	265	81	0	42	532
Extant <244m	0	27	106	0	25	55	37	8	8	266
Total	2	148	121	0	31	320	118	8	50	798
Destroyed >244m	4	39	8	1	2	83	15	0	13	165
Destroyed <244m	2	27	45	0	104	194	199	59	14	644
Total	6	66	53	1	106	277	214	59	27	809

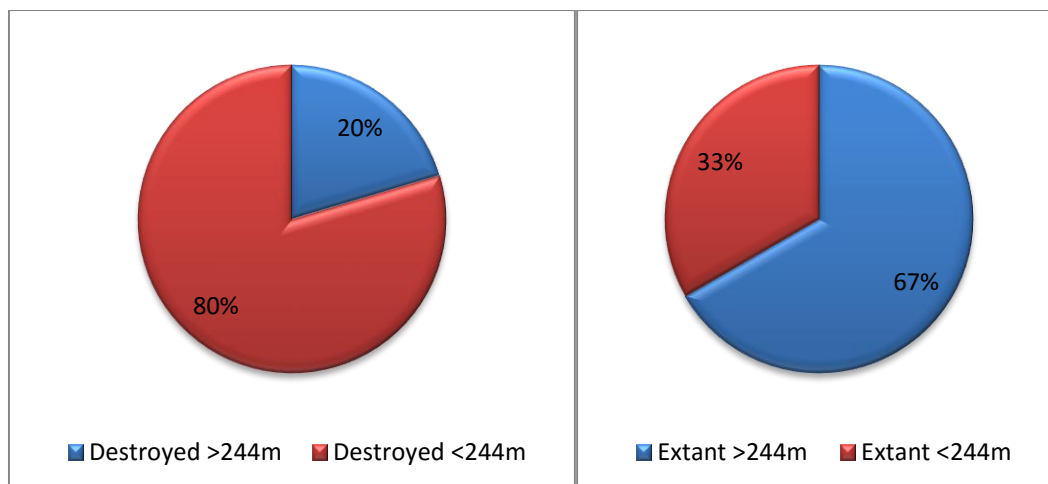


Figure 28: distribution of extant and destroyed barrows in relation to upland and lowland environments

This distribution is perhaps unsurprising. Garwood's (2007b, 134-7) recent analysis of the spatial distribution of round barrows and ring-ditches within the West Midlands

identified three key factors influencing patterns of survival and destruction: the historical and geographical incidences of arable farming, urban and industrial development and obscuration by processes such as alluviation. Crop marks, representing the majority of destroyed sites, by their very nature appear in landscapes where conditions are conducive to their appearance such as ploughed arable land, especially on gravel subsoils (Wilson 2000, 67-86). The majority of land given over to arable agriculture is located in the eastern lowlands and the broad river valleys where the soils are more freely drained (Allott 2011, 360). Here the effects of centuries of agricultural activity, particularly ploughing, has removed almost all of the upstanding monuments, known now only as ring ditches or historical records. This process has early origins; the barrows at Sharpstones Hill, Shropshire (Barker et al 1991) and Astley, Worcestershire (Green 1962) were reduced by early agricultural activity in the Iron Age and Romano-British periods respectively. This was not, however, a continual process of barrows unrelentingly denuded by the plough over long periods; sustained intensive arable farming is largely a feature of the south and east of the borderlands only (Hooke 2006). Instead, it may be that mound levelling was a piecemeal affair, probably due to short-lived episodes of arable cultivation in otherwise pastoral areas, the process accelerating from the 17th century onwards due to an expansion in arable farming and grassland improvements (Garwood 2007b: 134-6). This is in contrast to other regions of Britain, such as the Stonehenge environs and the Upper Thames Valley, where medieval arable farming accounted for most of the destroyed barrows (Peters 1999).

In many cases the barrows survived, sometimes as substantial mounds, until the 18th and 19th Century. At Clent Heath in Worcestershire, a cemetery of five barrows survived to such a degree that Bishop Lyttleton could dig through the mound in c.1760 and discover a "considerable quantity of burnt wood and ashes at the depth of fourteen feet" (cited in Allies 1852, 137). Of the five barrows only two heavily denuded mounds survive, barely rising above 0.3m. The 19th century enclosures certainly accelerated the destruction of mounds; Allies (1852, 110) for example recounts how a worker in 1822 removed what appears to have been a barrow cemetery of five large closely spaced barrows on Bunkers Hill, Worcestershire. Although the barrows were unlikely to have been from the Early Bronze Age (each had a large ferrous ring in the central sector at the base of the mound), the removal is indicative of the practice of levelling newly enclosed land. Williams (1808, 9), writing at the turn of the 19th century describes the environs of Leominster in Herefordshire as 'thickly scattered

with tumuli', where now only a small dispersed scatter of ring ditches remain within c10km of the town. In other places even these ephemeral remains do not survive and we are left only with tantalizing glimpses of what may have been impressive barrowscapes and testimony to the possible proliferation of barrows in the lowlands. An observation by Kenrick Watson writing in 1839 (cited in Allies 1852, 113) of Hartlebury Common in Worcestershire demonstrates this clearly, probably identifying false crested barrows.

"...when standing upon Hartlebury Common...an individual might easily be carried in imagination to the plains of Wiltshire, with all their recollections and associations. Immediately beneath the brow of the hill are a number of mounds, in appearance like tumuli".

There are no upstanding barrows surviving in the vicinity today, and little in the way of cropmark evidence although confirmation of the existence of barrows in the area comes from the excavation of a ring ditch at Astley (Green 1962) less than 2km distant.

Most of the surviving mounds in the borderlands are located in the upland areas to the west, where the soils, topography and climate are more suited to grasses and account for much of the vegetation types found (Allott 2011). These enclosed and unenclosed grasslands, along with areas of rough grazing and other marginal environments, largely escaped the effects of the plough (Griffiths 1989).

However, socio-political pressures such as the high grain prices following the Napoleonic wars meant that land previously considered marginal was utilized, however briefly, as arable land and these localized and episodic periods of arable agriculture are evident by the characteristic ridge and furrow seen high on the Shropshire Hills (Hooke 2006, 96). Although cairns, particularly in the uplands, largely escaped the ravages of the plough, they were often looked upon as sources of raw materials. Writing about the parish of Llangadfan in Montgomeryshire, the Reverend Griffiths Edwards (1869, 327) details the destruction of a number of cairns to build walls for Llwydiarth Park, the outbuildings of a hotel and to provide drainage for a field, with the cist from one cairn utilized in an entrance to the local post office.

Although the borderlands are not generally thought of as a modern industrial region, the area has been subject to extractive industries since at least the Bronze Age (Timberlake 1994). These activities have led to widespread but localised destruction of round barrows such as the two cairns noted by Hartshorne (1841, 5) on Abdon Burf, the northern summit of Brown Clee Hill in Shropshire, since eradicated by

quarrying with no record. There are some examples of early 'salvage' work in the borderlands, such as that undertaken at South End Farm, Mathon, Herefordshire in 1910 (Blake 1913). Here, urned and un-urned cremations were investigated, but only after at least 20 or more interments had been lost. Upright stones and unburnt bones may possibly represent an earlier phase of cist burial; it is not unusual for a Middle Bronze Age cemetery to be located next to barrows, for example at Bromfield, Shropshire (Stanford 1982). In many cases the extent of this destruction cannot be quantified. Halkyn Mountain in Flintshire has been mined, at times intensely, for its lead probably since the Roman period (North 1962) and this, allied with limestone quarrying, may account for the central plateau being noticeably devoid of round barrows and cairns in an area ringed by such monuments (Fig 29).

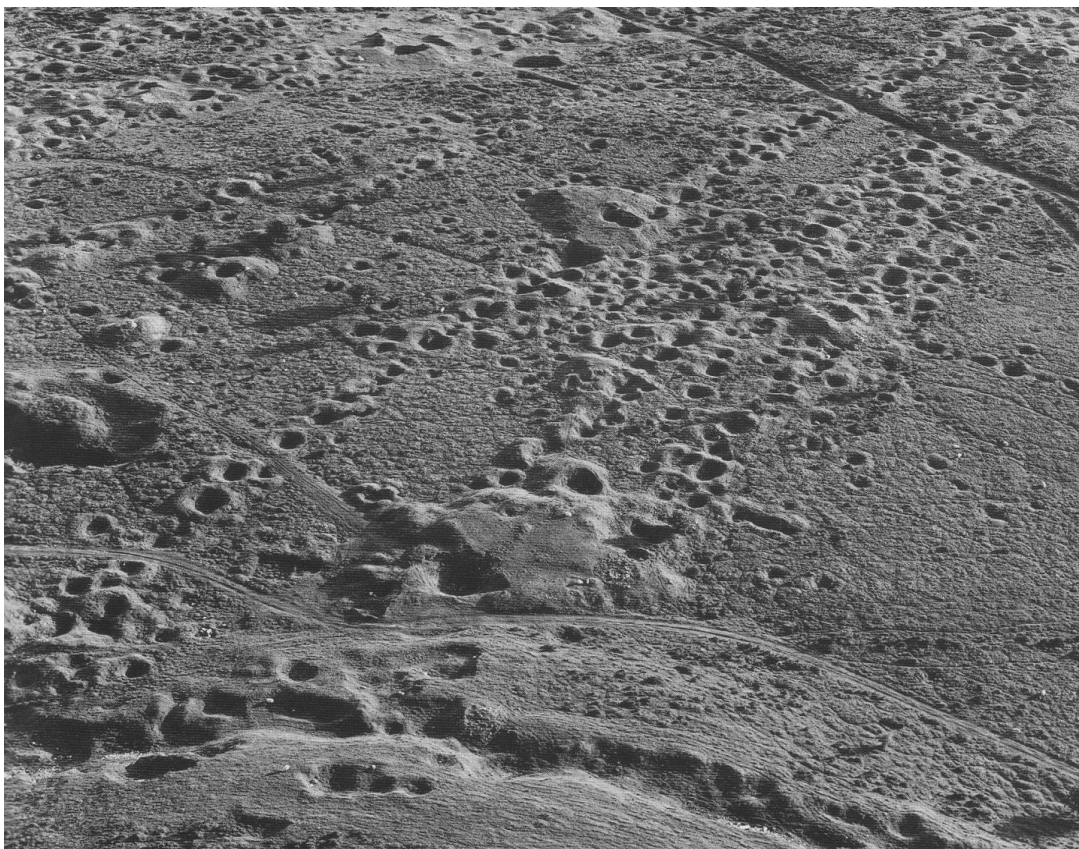


Figure 29: the effects of lead mining on Halkyn Mountain, Flintshire (©Chris Musson 1994)

The post-war years saw an increase in salvage and rescue archaeology at aggregate extraction sites with somewhat variable results. The excavation and subsequent publication of the round barrow at Astley, Worcester (Green 1962), recorded in advance of encroaching gravel works, can be contrasted with that of a barrow (PRN 824) excavated by a local amateur archaeologist at Stapleton, Shropshire in the 1960s. The HER record states that an inhumation of a 40-50 year old male was discovered and the bones were to be transferred to Rowley House Museum in

Shrewsbury. All efforts by the author to trace any record of this excavation have proved futile and the archive, the remains, and even the identity of the archaeologist remain unknown.

Whilst ultimately destructive, the quarrying of areas in the borderlands has provided much useful and detailed information on Early Bronze Age sites in the borderlands. The foresight of local archaeologists, aware of the possibilities afforded by aggregate extraction, did much to mitigate against this loss and have provided some of the most useful information on barrow cemeteries in the region. In 1965 Stanley Stanford arranged with the staff at the newly opened quarry at Bromfield, Shropshire to be called to excavate any features uncovered when the topsoil was removed (Stanford 1985). Similarly, the important ring-ditch cemetery at Holt, Worcestershire was excavated between 1970 and 1975 following concern at the impact of quarrying on newly identified cropmarks (Hunt *et al* 1986). More recently, fieldwork at gravel extraction sites in Herefordshire has revealed important finds such as the Beaker burials at Wellington Quarry, (Harrison *et al* 1999) and Aymestrey (Woodiwiss 1989). Although extant barrows and cairns are afforded statutory protection in most cases, destruction is ongoing due to quarrying, including two extant cairns excavated prior to a quarry extension at Llanelwedd Rocks, Builth Wells (CPAT 2007; 2008).

It is difficult to assess the extent of destruction of round barrows due to industrial and urban development. Garwood (2007b, 136) has noted a lack of sites reported during the major town and city expansions of the West Midlands during the 18th and 19th centuries, yet sites represented by cropmarks certainly exist on the periphery of towns and cities. Modern commercial and housing development on the outskirts of Shrewsbury at Meole Brace (Hughes and Woodward 1995; Barfield and Hughes 1997) and Sharpstones Hill (Barker *et al* 1991) respectively has resulted in the identification and excavation of ring-ditches. In the case of Sharpstones Hill the ring-ditches were previously unrecorded. The suggestion then by Garwood (2007b, 136) that similar sites may lie beneath the developments is reasonable, indeed given the proliferation of ring-ditches along the River Severn either side of Shrewsbury and Worcester it would be surprising to find otherwise. Such examples are not isolated, a barrow was uncovered at a former military base in Hereford (Jones & Duncan 2003) and two extant barrows, partially excavated in the late 19th century still stand amidst the modern sprawl of Wrexham (Davies 1929, 414-17).

The extent of woodland coverage in the borderlands is uneven, partly reflecting those areas where agriculture has proved unrewarding. Although much of the woodland is made up of relatively small parcels, there are some more extensive areas, especially in north-west Herefordshire, south-west Shropshire and eastern Wales. Much of these western areas are conifer plantations, planted by the Forestry Commission after the First World War (Allott 2011, 259), although the Wyre Forest in Shropshire on the west bank of the River Severn is the third largest surviving area of ancient woodland in England, covering c.2800ha (Allott 2011, 265). Although historic mapping allows those areas to be examined prior to modern planting, the omission of many sites by the OS makes this an unreliable method to gauge past distribution. By example the high ground of Radnor Forest, Powys has just 2 '*tumuli*' recorded on the 1st Edition OS maps prior to the establishment of the large conifer plantation, yet 14 barrows and cairns, some quite substantial, have subsequently been recorded in the area not covered by the plantation. As such the level of destruction due to forestry is currently unknown.

There are of course many other processes which have had an unquantifiable effect on the destruction of monuments although the impact on overall site distribution is perhaps less affected. The expedient use of barrows and cairns as sources of raw materials has already been referred to in the probably widespread practice of wall construction in the uplands. The mound which covered the Mold gold cape was demolished to fill up a small gravel pit (Powell 1953, 162) and Wormelow Tump, Herefordshire, was destroyed by road building by 1896 (Grinsell 1993). The flooding of valleys in Wales to create reservoirs has in some cases left barrows and cairns beneath the water as demonstrated at the Pont Cynon barrow, visible on the 1:2500 1887 OS map before the creation of Lake Vrynwy in Powys in 1881-91 (Rowlands 2003, 128). As Lynch (1993, 1) recounts in the introduction to her volume on the flooded landscape of the Brenig Valley, the loss of such sites in the later 19th and early 20th centuries was of little concern.

It is difficult to estimate the number of barrows that have been lost without record but indications of possible locations of barrows and cairns may be gleaned from field and place names. Grinsell (1953, 62-9) provides a brief etymology of the names relating to English funerary mounds and Ellis Davies (1929, 6) likewise for Wales, and the database reveals a wide variety of terminology across the borderlands. The origin of the term *barrow* lies in the southern counties of England, probably derived from the

Old English *beorg*, and was used to denote artificial and natural hills alike (Gelling 2000, 127). The term is found in place names, albeit infrequently, within the West Midlands such as at Barrow Hill, Chaddesley Corbett in Worcestershire. Barrowfields, near Grimley, Worcestershire, may refer to long destroyed and unrecorded barrows but the field is located in an area of local high ground directly overlooking the gravel terraces of the River Severn and may refer to the view once afforded of one of the few barrow cemeteries in the borderlands, at Holt, Worcestershire. Tump is a common barrow name and there are many examples in the Marches counties, including the Kerry Two Tumps and Shenton's Tump along the Kerry Ridgeway in Powys, and Priors Holt Tumps in Shropshire and the term lives on in place names such as the previously mentioned Wormelow Tump. There are examples in Powys and Flintshire of the Welsh equivalent *twmp*, where mounds are no longer visible. The place name suffix -low (OE *hlaw*), common in barrow names in Derbyshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire, can be used to denote barrows and is more commonly found in field names rather than settlements, although Ludlow (the mound or tumulus by the noisy stream - Mills 2003, 311) in Shropshire may have taken its name from the barrow in the churchyard. Gelling (2000, 162) suggests the use of the term as a burial place is commonest in southern counties, further north the term is used more frequently to describe a natural hill. The use of *Knap* is rare in the Marches but examples are found in Powys and Shropshire, similarly with *butt* which can be found in the two separate Robin Hood's Butts sites at Bromfield and on the Long Mynd, both Shropshire, which are also examples of personal names appended to barrows. Further west into Wales there is similar variety in field names with examples such as *gorsed*, *poncyn*, *crug*, *twmpath*, *gwyddfa*, *bedd*, *carnedd* and *carn*. It is clear that not all will refer to barrows, *Tomen* for example is used frequently to denote a motte (Ellis Davies 1929, 6).

A search of all of the records extracted those entries which are known by place name evidence only. Each record was reviewed, and where the record detailed a fieldname or place name only with no other corroborating evidence, these were removed from the main database for the purpose of wider analysis but are presented here (Figure 30). Additionally, in some instances place and field name entries overlap with the extant or documentary evidence for round barrows and cairns and thus constitute duplicate records within the database and were similarly discounted. The distribution of place and field names is heavily biased towards the Welsh counties. This may be a legacy of fieldwork and research bias rather than a real distribution and largely

depends upon fieldworkers who provided corpi of such data, notably Ellis Davies (1929; 1949) for Flintshire and Denbighshire, although Grinsell (1993) recorded the local names for Herefordshire in his barrow list and these have thus made their way onto HER records.

Perhaps the most significant result from the examination of place name evidence can be seen by comparing their distribution with the other records for round barrows. To the west of the study area, there is a direct correlation between the instances of placename evidence and a paucity of round barrow sites. This is particularly noticeable in the region between Welshpool in the south and Llangollen in the north (Fig 30). Large concentrations of round barrows lie to the west on the higher ground of the Berwyn Mountains and to the east are similar densities of ring ditches in the Tanat valley and around the confluence of the upper Severn and the Vyrnwy. In between these zones, what would otherwise appear to be a landscape devoid of round barrows is filled with place and field names suggestive of round barrow sites.

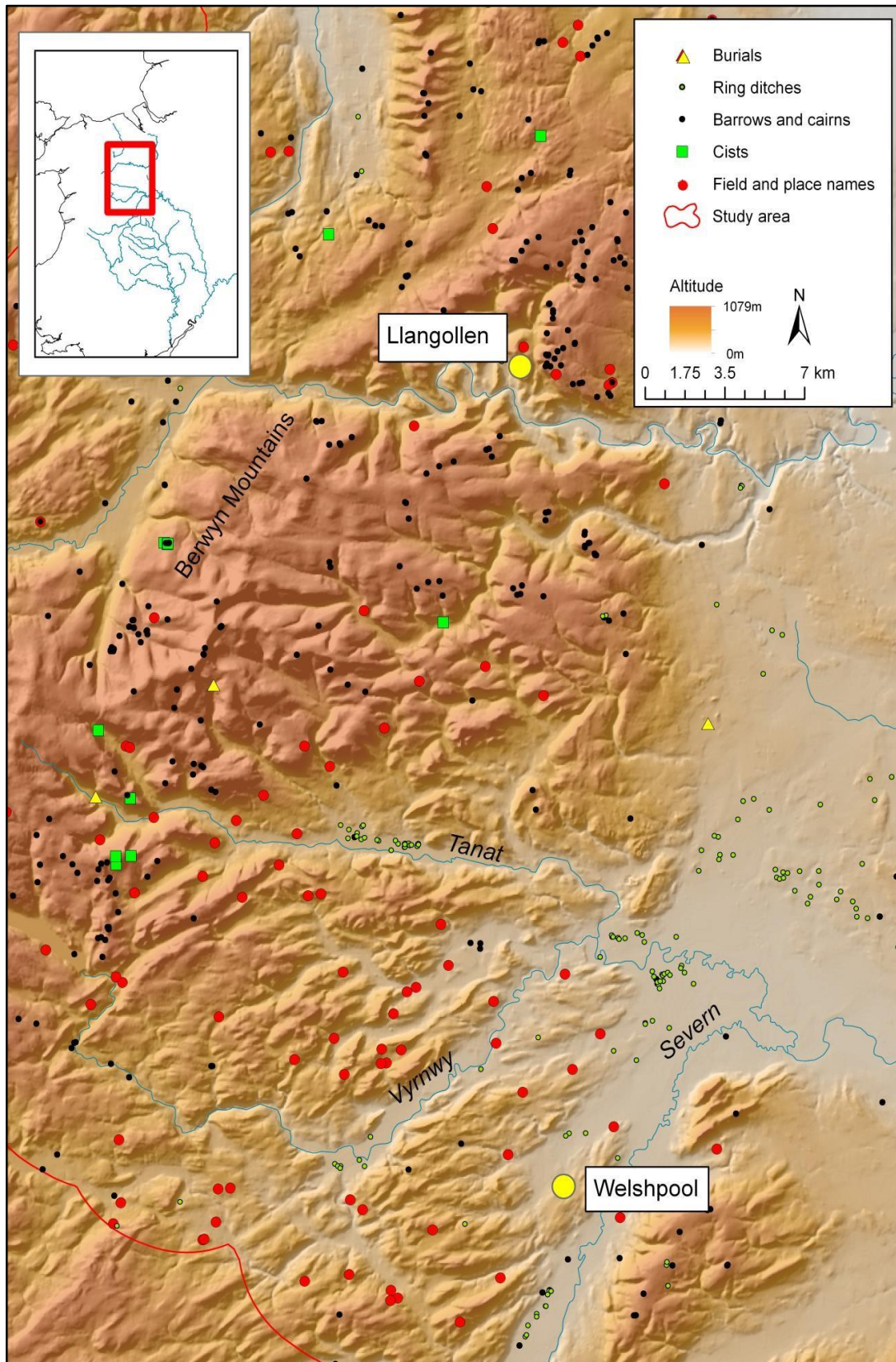


Figure 30: detail of placename evidence for round barrows

3.6 Archaeological biases

A final consideration to be taken into account when examining large archaeological datasets, particularly those that are spread across diverse areas and administrative boundaries, is that of fieldwork and research biases. As outlined in Chapter 1, regions with little prehistoric upstanding archaeology such as Worcestershire have not attracted the same level of enquiry as those with extant sites. Those areas with high site density have been subject to intensive historical and modern scrutiny. The county based fieldwork and documentary research by Ellis Davies in Denbighshire and Flintshire (Davies 1929; Davies 1949) provided a rich resource for later researchers, particularly for sites lost since the early 20th century. Similarly the barrows of Radnorshire (Dunn 1974; 1988) and Merioneth (Bowen and Gresham 1967) have been catalogued and Leslie Grinsell (1993) compiled a barrow list for Herefordshire. It is perhaps unsurprising that Worcestershire has received little attention, given such low numbers of surviving barrows, but the omission of any synthesis of the Shropshire barrows more so, particularly when the high numbers of extant sites are considered.

In more recent times the Welsh counties have benefitted from the Cadw funded pan-Wales survey of Prehistoric Funerary and Ritual sites, itself not entirely concerned with identifying new sites although some new discoveries were inevitably made. Similarly the bias between upland and lowland sites is well illustrated by the extent to which these are covered. The publication of Darvill's (1986) report for the CBA concerned with the archaeology of upland environments generated considerable interest in Wales and resulted in Cadw initiating an 'Uplands Initiative', an ongoing project that assesses and investigates the archaeological potential of the Welsh Uplands and discovers new sites each year (Silvester 2003). On the English side of the border the bias has again been towards upland landscapes, including the Marches Uplands Mapping Project (Stoertz 2004 - part of the wider English Heritage National mapping Program) although Whimster's (1989) earlier survey of the Welsh Marches did cast a wider net to encompass both uplands and lowlands.

3.7 Barrow forms

3.7.1 Introduction

This section will examine the variety of external forms of round barrows in the borderlands. The term 'round barrow' is used to encompass a broad range of earthen and stone mounds, barrows and cairns respectively. Within these classifications there are varying morphologies which are considered distinct enough to be identified in the field. The traditional classification of round barrows (Fig 31) is related to mound form which has its origins in the early studies of the barrows of the Wessex region (Colt Hoare 1812) and formalised by Grinsell (1953; 1957) and Ashbee (1960) although it has been argued that the latter's scheme is too simplistic (McOmish *et al* 2002, 33). Thus the earthen mounds are generally distinguished by their external mound shape and by the presence or absence of banks, ditches and berms. Cairns may be outwardly simple mounds of stone with no visible embellishment, they may be defined by a ring or bank of stone (ring cairns) or may be small mounded cairns surrounded by a kerb of larger stones (kerb cairns), although again there is much variety within these typologies (Lynch 1979). It can be difficult to distinguish between barrows and cairns by surface inspection alone. Whilst to some degree the construction materials of such monuments reflect the topography and geology, (cairns are generally found in the western uplands) a mature vegetation cover may cover a cairn resulting in the appearance of a barrow. The outward form of barrows and cairns may also mask internal complexity in that earthen mounds may cover a smaller stone cairn, or conversely, an earthen core may be capped by stone. It is only by excavation that such multi-phase monuments can be discerned and this chapter, concerned as it is with broad outlines, will mainly detail the outward form of the mound or cairn, that which is presented to most researchers.

The HER records incorporated into the database provide varied detail on the morphological characteristics of round barrows. Many provide little beyond the initial classification as round barrow or cairn unless some distinctive feature such as a ditch or bank is noted, or if the monument conforms to one of the other readily identifiable forms. It is taken here then to assume that an undefined round barrow within the HER records is that of a simple mound or cairn with no other discerning feature, the ubiquity of this form of round barrow being such that it is generally assumed to be the norm and no further detail is required. However, rather than rely on HER

classifications, all monument records were examined for details regarding form and features.

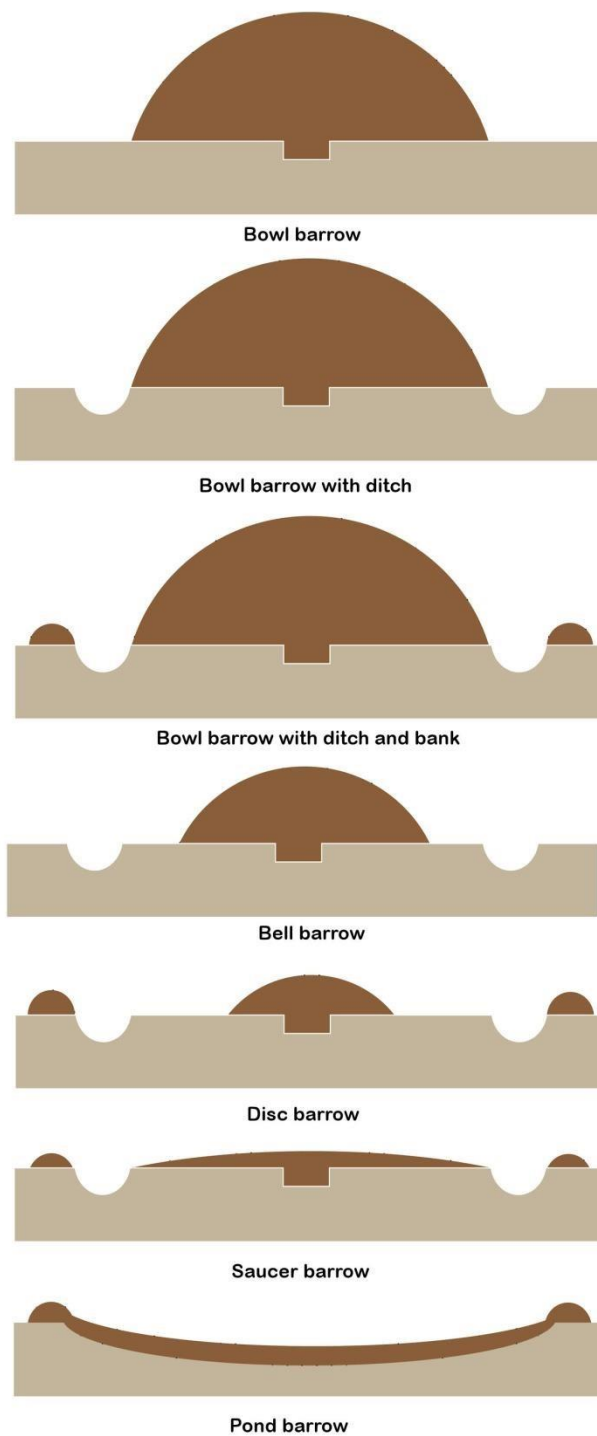


Figure 31: Idealised barrow forms (after Grinsell 1953, Ashbee 1960, Burgess 1980)

3.7.2 Problems with misidentification

There is of course considerable scope for misidentification when dealing with unexcavated mounds. In addition to natural mounds, afforestation circles, hut circles and windmill steads (Grinsell 1953, 100-1), there is a particular problem within the borderlands due to the high density of Norman mottes (Rowley 1986, 101). It is often assumed that lowland barrows on fertile soils will have been destroyed by ploughing and will be recognisable only as ring ditches, if at all. Large extant mounds are thus commonly dismissed as being barrows due to their very survival and instead are frequently classified as mottes. Such is the case with the Crugyn at Newcastle, Shropshire (PRN 1956; Hogg and King 1963, 95) yet the size of the mound and its position close to the river does not negate the possibility of such mounds being barrows (Fig 32). A further four mounds are dispersed over a distance of 3km eastwards from the Crugyn along the river Clun, and a fifth, largely destroyed by ploughing, contained a cairn within a kerb-circle (Jones 1936). There is a similar distribution of barrows close to the river in the Teme Valley which runs parallel to the Clun on the southern side of the watershed. Linges (1987) encountered this problem with the investigation of a small group of large flat topped mounds in north Ayrshire, commonly thought to be medieval, before concluding that they were more likely to be prehistoric in origin. When large lowland mounds in the borderlands, including examples such as those at Bromfield (Fortey 1885) have been investigated, many are found to be barrows, or have been built upon barrows. Despite finding cremated remains and 'zig-zag' decorated inverted urns at Eaton, Shropshire (PRN 03178) sometime in the late 19th century (Wright 1872, 47) the mound was described in the Victoria County History as a Norman Castle (Page 1908, 275, 411). This description was perpetuated by Hogg and King (1963, 97) and the OS due largely to its position in the landscape and its size. The Gwerclas barrow (PRN 100814) was designated a castle by the RCAHMW in 1921 but evidence of a kerb on the eastern side has since necessitated re-interpretation. A convincing example of the later appropriation of round barrows is that of Rug Park mound, Denbighshire. The steep sided mound, interpreted as a motte 30m in diameter, was found upon excavation in 1878-9 to cover a complex barrow with a central cist covered by a cairn, bounded by a larger setting of stones forming a kerb (Bowen and Gresham 1967, 76-7).



Figure 32: The Crugyn, Newcastle, Shropshire, described as a motte.

3.7.3 The variety of external barrow forms represented in the study area

The variety of Bronze Age barrow forms present in the borderlands is wide and diverse, apparently representing many of the known types from England and Wales (Table 5 and Fig 33). The predominant morphology is that of the amorphous mound with no other discernible external features. The remainder are those which are somewhat distinctive such as the eight barrows reported to be Wessex or 'fancy barrows' (pond, bell and disc barrows), and the ring and kerb cairns, platform cairns and flat-topped mounds. This last category is perhaps the most unsatisfactory and illustrates well the problems of barrow morphology. Many sites in the Welsh counties have a flat or flattened top and it can be extremely difficult to ascertain whether the extant form is that of design or attributable to a variety of factors such as early unrecorded interventions by Victorian barrow diggers (Marsden 1999, 72), animal burrowing, and landscape sculpting for various reasons including ornamental and military. Similarly the size of some mounds can be attributed to plough spreading

such as the Crossfield Lane Barrow (PRN 1078) which gained two meters in diameter and lost 0.5m in height during the course of twenty years. The oval plans at some barrows, for example Bongham Bank cairn 1 (PRN 1162) and Crossway Barrow (PRN1081), both Powys, appears to have been created by ploughing eating away at the edge. The form visible today then is the result of varied constructional choices which in turn have been transformed by anthropogenic and natural processes of denudation and alteration. As such, the definitions and quantities presented here cannot be considered definitive. The identification and classification of round barrows is a product not only of the vagaries of individual interpretation by field workers but also the natural and artificial processes of erosion and preservation. It is necessary then to examine the external morphology of round barrows within the borderlands, particularly with regard to those instances where classifications by previous fieldworkers suggest some distinctive attributes.

Table 5: Monument type by county (as listed by HER)

	Conwy	Denbs.	Flints.	Gwyn.	Herefs	Powys	Shrops	Worcs	Wrex	Totals
Pond	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Bell	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Disc	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	5
Flat top	0	4	9	0	2	40	14	0	2	71
Kerb cairn	0	5	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	8
Kerb cairn (possible)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Platform	0	4	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	8
Platform / kerbed	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ring cairn	0	4	3	0	0	11	7	0	5	30
Ring cairn (possible)	2	3	1	0	0	3	2	0	1	12
Bowl (inc undefined)	5	170	154	1	38	347	121	10	52	898
Totals	7	191	167	1	42	408	146	13	62	1038

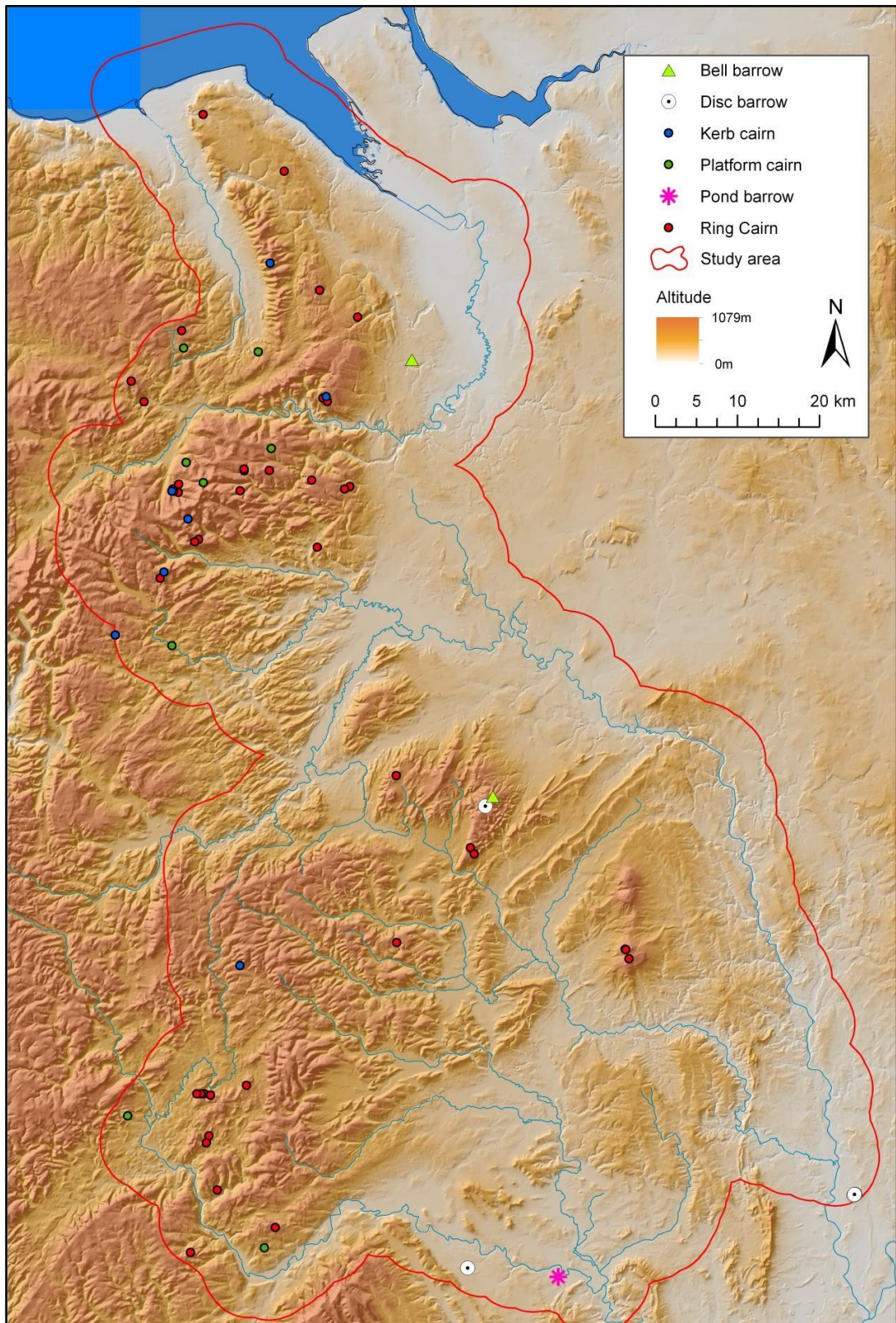


Figure 33: distinctive barrow forms in the borderlands

3.7.4 Bowl barrows

The majority of round barrows within Britain are considered to be bowl barrows, or variants thereof (Ashbee 1960, 24) and this also appears to be the case within the borderlands with 87% of all recorded examples being classified as simple mounds or cairns (Table 5). The external form of bowl barrows consists of a mound or cairn, broadly hemispherical, occasionally encircled by a ditch immediately adjacent to the mound, and more rarely a bank which is external to the ditch. In plan they rarely present a true circular form but this may be a result of weathering or damage by other means. The distribution in the borderlands of this outwardly simple form is widespread, although the numbers are heavily biased towards the west (Figure 36). This is probably due in no small part to the patterns of survival and destruction previously outlined. The form is evident in all altitudinal zones and topographic situations.

The English Heritage monument description class (English Heritage 1989) demonstrates a wide range of sizes attributed to this form, from 3-65m in diameter and 0.5-6m in height. The barrows from the borderlands display examples from the full spectrum of size ranging from 2-80m in diameter and 0.4-2m in height, although 251 of the 898 barrows within this category have no recorded diameters and the majority are less than 30m in diameter (Figs 34, 35).

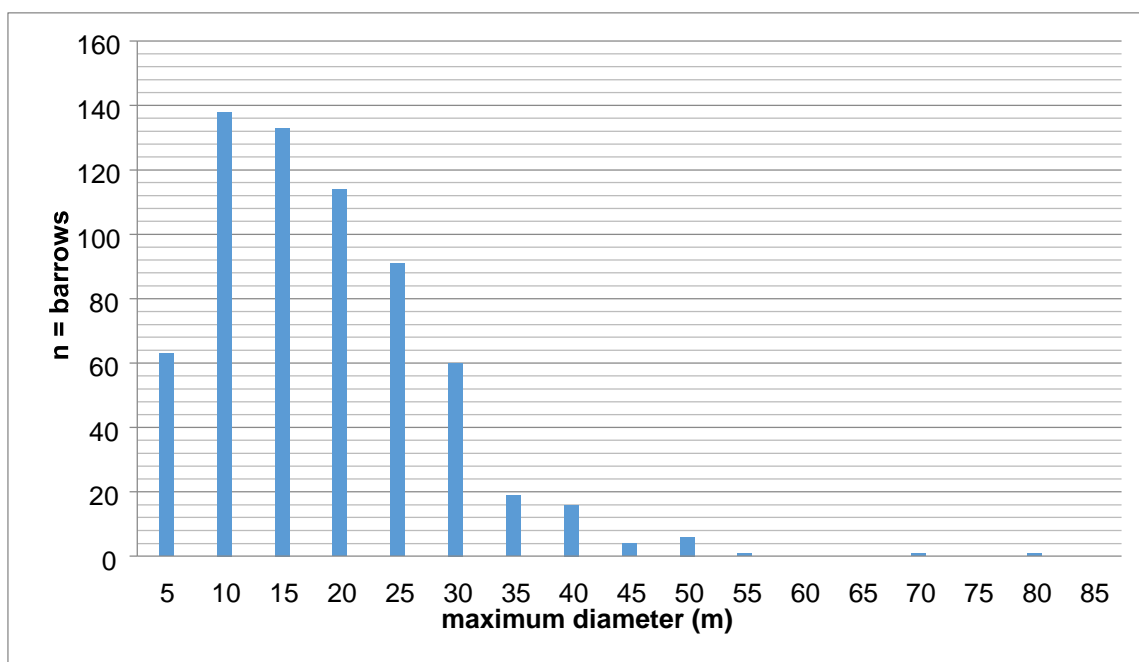


Figure 34: diameters of bowl barrows and cairns

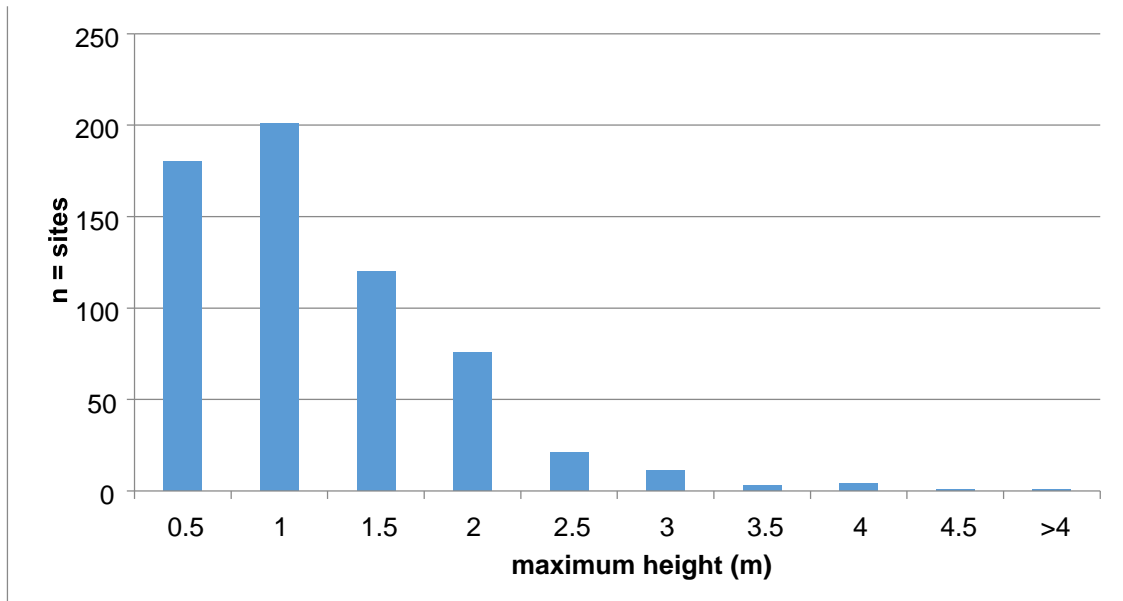


Figure 35: heights of bowl barrows and cairns

Three of the largest examples within the database at Buckton Park, Herefordshire (Ø 80m), and Eyton, Shropshire (Ø 70m) appear anomalous and are possibly misidentifications. The feature at Eyton (PRN 2514) appears to be a natural knoll. The mounds at Buckton Park (PRN 202,203) are more problematic. They have been de-scheduled by English Heritage due to the likelihood of being glacial in origin, yet the northern mound, more oval than round in shape, has an encircling ditch and both are located close to other ring ditches. A similar ditched feature to that of the northern Buckton mound was recently discovered at nearby Broadward Hall, Shropshire during excavations by the University of Worcester at the findspot of the Broadward Hoard, although the purpose and date of the structure was not determined. However there are a number of mounds between 40-55m in diameter which are likely to be large barrows. The pair of mounds Brynar and Riddle I and II at Kerry, Powys (PRN 1045, 1046) have been described as possible drumlins although there is a lack of similar glacial features in the valley and two pairs of ring ditches lie further along the valley to the east. Bryn yr Orsedd, in Flintshire, (Davies 1949, 167) with a diameter of 54m may seem overly large in an area of smaller barrows ranging from 12-30m but it was situated just 1.5km to the north-west of Gop Cairn. This enigmatic oval cairn, 80m wide on its longest axis, 12m high, and constructed of limestone blocks is the second largest artificial mound in Britain. It was examined in the manner of the time by sinking a shaft through the centre but no artefacts or burials were recovered (Boyd Dawkins 1901). This partial excavation has not provided any

information on date or function but Lynch (2000, 74) has suggested that its large size and dominant position may suggest parallels with the Neolithic passage graves of the Boyne in Ireland. One further parallel to be drawn is that with Silbury Hill, Wiltshire, construction of which commenced around 2400 cal BC (Bayliss *et al* 2007, 40). Although significantly larger, a recent re-evaluation has suggested it was constructed in phases over a prolonged period of time (Whittle and Best 1997) but in common with Gop Cairn its purpose remains elusive. Other large examples may be due to mound spreading caused by ploughing. Two barrows near Henlann, Denbighshire (Plas Heaton A and B) have diameters of c.40m but a height of just 0.8m. Again their position in a landscape largely devoid of round barrows may suggest they are of natural origin but this does not preclude the possibility of their being barrows. Two further mounds lie 150m and 300m to the north, the closest of which, Plas Heaton C, was found to contain 5 inhumations, one accompanied by a Beaker and an urned cremation burial (Wynne-Ffoulkes 1851).

The idealised domed shape of the bowl-barrow is perhaps just that, there is much variety in the ratios between circumference and height, but 71 bowl barrows have been recorded in the borderlands as having a flattened top. There is evidence from excavations at the Llanelwedd Rocks cairns, Powys (PRN1611, 33881 - CPAT 2007; 2008) and from other areas such as the Peak District (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 27), that in some instances the design was intentional, perhaps to provide a platform for ceremonial purposes (Garwood 2007b, 142). It is however possible in many cases that this profile is the result of truncation by early barrow diggers. A description of how this flattened top may be achieved is illustrated in a report by Charles Fortey, excavating at Robin Hood's Butt (PRN1172) in Shropshire in 1884:

“The work of exploration commenced by digging a trench fourteen feet long by four feet wide on the summit of the tump, another cutting being subsequently made at a right angle to the first, and extending to the outside of the mound in order to facilitate the work of excavation” (Fortey 1885, 446).

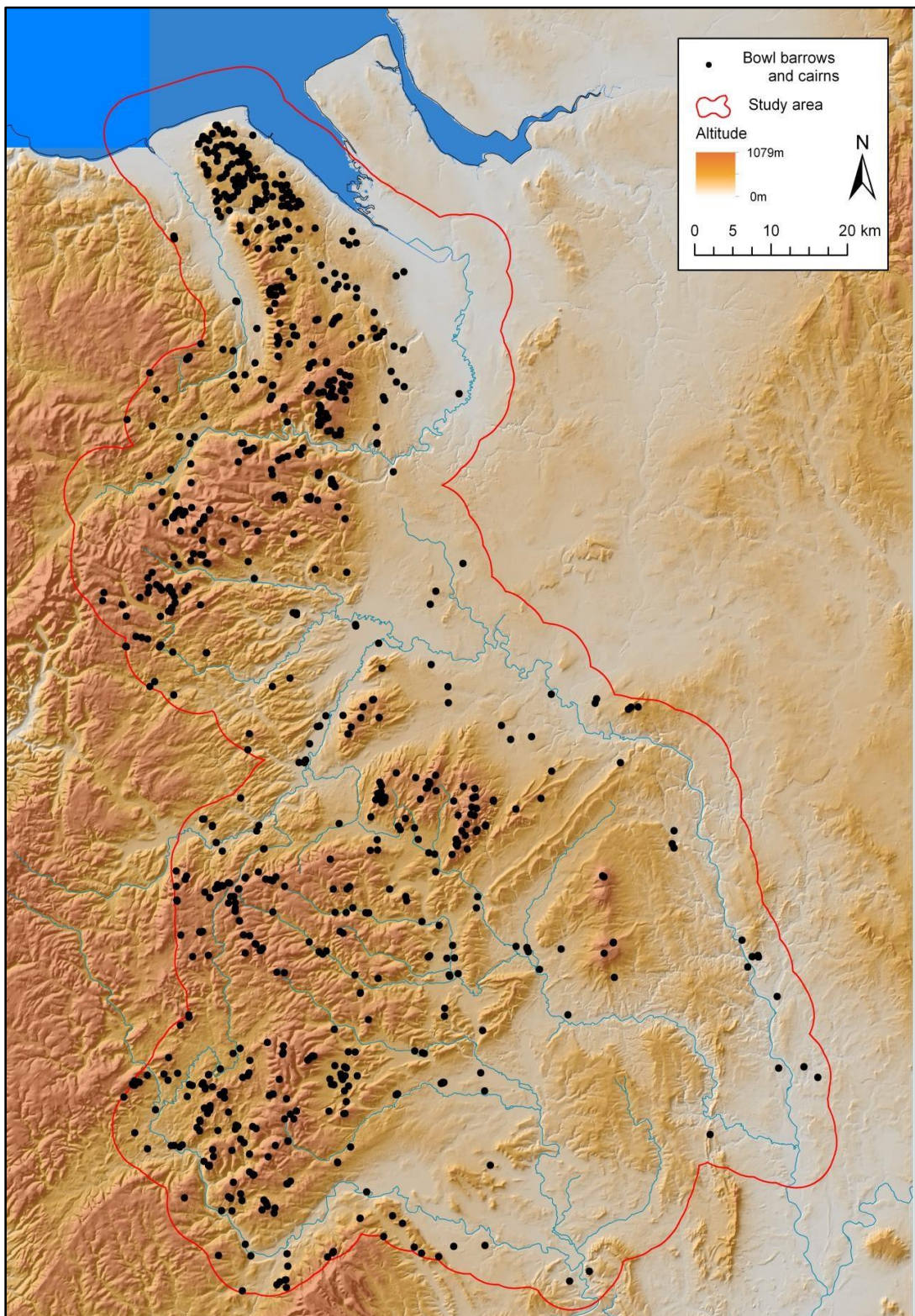


Figure 36: the distribution of bowl barrows and cairns

3.7.5 Bell barrows

Bell barrows are differentiated from bowl barrows by the addition of a berm between the mound and the ditch. Grinsell (1953, 19) suggested this was a development of the bowl barrow to prevent mound material accumulating and thus obscuring the ditch. Leaving aside for the moment the purely functional argument for a ditch, the two examples of this form of round barrow identified within the database are somewhat different from the classic typology.

The example from the Long Mynd, Shropshire (PRN00194) is a curious one. The large mound, 35m in diameter and standing to a height of 4.2m has a break of slope c2.m up from the ground surface and apparently cutting c.2m into the mound creating a stepped appearance. It is this step which has been identified as the berm and which gives rise to the classification as a bell barrow. The appearance then is one that suggests at least two possible options: the barrow was created to assume this form from the outset or that a smaller rounded mound was constructed upon a pre-existing flat topped monument. There is no evidence for a ditch although one can be traced around the north east quadrant of an immediately adjacent barrow.

The other possibility is the Fairy Oak Barrow (PRN101239) in Wrexham. It is difficult now to determine much of its original shape but Ellis Davies (1929, 417) recognised its anomalous and unique form in Denbighshire, describing it as bell-shaped and about 17m in diameter. The berm partway up the mound was apparent to an OS investigator in 1963 although no ditch was detected. A small scale excavation in 1882 found decomposed human bone with fragments of pottery a small distance away (ibid). The topographic situation of these two barrows could not be more different. The first barrow is situated on one of the summits of the Long Mynd whilst the Fairy Oak barrow is in the lowland plain on which Wrexham is now situated. No ditches were identified at either barrow but this outward form of a stepped barrow has been identified in Wessex, albeit with a ditch (Grinsell 1953, 20).

3.7.6 Pond barrows

Pond barrows differ from most other barrow forms in that there is no mound present. Rather a circular depression is created with the resultant material utilised to form a bank around the circumference. Their distribution was generally considered to be

restricted to Wiltshire and Dorset with concentrations around Stonehenge and Avebury (Grinsell, 1953, 23), but discoveries at Barrow Hills, Oxfordshire (Barclay and Halpin 1999) and St. Osyth, Essex (Germany 2007) have extended this distribution north and east whilst recent work at a group of seven possible pond barrows at Llanfyrnach, Pembrokeshire (Poucher (2011) may extend this to the west. Lynch (1979, 7) has suggested that pond barrows may be the lowland form of the variant circles and ring cairns of the west and north.

No upstanding pond barrows are known from the study area although a possible example was recently excavated at Bradbury Lines, Hereford (Jones & Duncan 2003). Here, a large, circular, steep sided feature 18.4m in diameter and 1.7m deep was cut into the natural sand and gravel. A bank, identified by the fills at the edge of the depression, may have surrounded the depression and these fills contained sherds from a Collared Urn. A flattened mound of grey, clayey gravel containing a single sherd of Early Bronze Age pottery was then constructed in the centre of the depression which would have had the effect of creating a ditched structure surrounding a platform. This is unusual as most pond barrows fill naturally and do not have artificial fills or deliberate alterations (Thomas 2005, 93). The interior was eventually covered, again creating a smoothed depression in the landscape before being reused again in the Middle Bronze Age. Above this layer several burnt timbers, possibly representing a funerary structure were found, and radiocarbon dates from the wood of 1260-1000 cal BC (WK-16868; 2915±40 BP) and fragments of animal bone from the top of the wood 1310-1055 cal BC (WK-16869; 2968±34 BP) placed this period of activity in the Middle Bronze Age. Pond barrows from other regions have been identified in undulating landscapes (ibid.) which contrasts with that found at Bradbury lines which is situated on the broad valley floor of the River Wye.

3.7.7 Disc barrows

Disc barrows are a distinctive type of round barrow comprising a central mound separated from its enclosing ditch and outer bank by a wide berm. In some cases the mound is not substantial, rising to a height roughly equal to that of the bank (Grinsell 1953, 18). The ditch is usually an internal feature but not exclusively so. Their distribution is usually considered to be a southern phenomenon and their contents upon excavation served to place them within Piggott's (1938) Wessex culture. The database has five possibilities for disc barrows in the study area, three in

Worcestershire, and one each in Herefordshire and Shropshire. These barrows will be considered in turn.

Kempsey, Worcestershire

The Kempsey barrows consist of three similar earthworks in various degrees of survival on a ridge of high ground overlooking the Severn Valley. They are unequally spaced less than 100m apart (measurements taken from postulated centres of the barrows) on the edge of the high ground so that their aspect is towards the Severn Valley to the west. The central enclosures were once planted with trees, visible on 1st Edition OS maps, their subsequent removal disturbing the interior to such an extent that it is not possible to identify any mound. Geophysical and topographic surveys of the site were conducted but did not reveal any further detail (Figs 37-9). Whilst there may be some small element of doubt as to their antiquity, tree circles abound in this landscape and were probably planted as landscape features for nearby Pirton Court, such afforestation circles do not have internal ditches (Grinsell 1953, 100-1).

PRN2128

This barrow, the best preserved of the three, is defined by a circular area of c.25m enclosed by a low bank flanked by external and internal ditches, giving an overall diameter of c.35m. The bank survives around most of the circumference apart from the south east quadrant. The interior and exterior ditches are noticeable as slight depressions up to 2m in width but the exterior ditch appears to have been infilled on the south-eastern quadrant. The removal of trees from the centre of the enclosure has disturbed the interior to such an extent that it is not possible to identify any mound. The barrow is sited on the very edge of the ridge in a false crest/skyline position either so as to be seen from or to look out over the valley to the north. Both this and PRN2127 have long views out across the Severn and to the Malvern Hills, Abberley Hills and further out to Titterstone Clee Hill.

PRN2127

This barrow is more ephemeral in nature than PRN2128 and has suffered from the same destructive processes of tree planting and felling and again no mound is visible. In addition, the concrete foundations of a WWII observation post are located in the north-west quadrant. The ditch is well defined on the western side and extrapolation of the arc would give an outside diameter of c.41m.

The site is similarly well placed on the edge and overlooks the dry valley to the north. English Heritage scheduling cites internal and external ditches.

PRN2126

This barrow is the least well preserved and is identifiable in its present state by the ditch that is visible on the common land. Vegetation cover, fencing and the continuation of the barrow into arable land means that little of the form of the barrow can be identified. Extrapolating a circle from the existing ditch gives an estimate of c28m for the diameter.

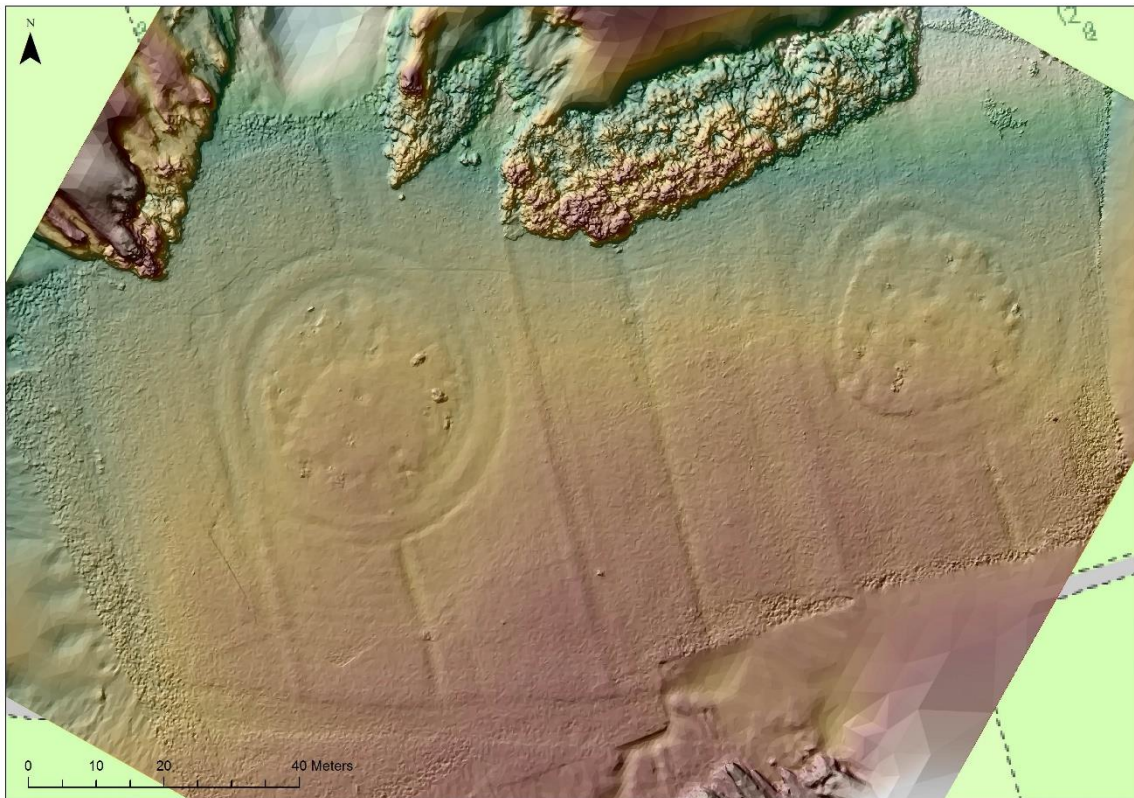


Figure 37: Digital Terrain Model of Kempsey Barrows PRN 2127 (west) and PRN 2128 (east)



Figure 38: Gradiometer survey 2128, 2127

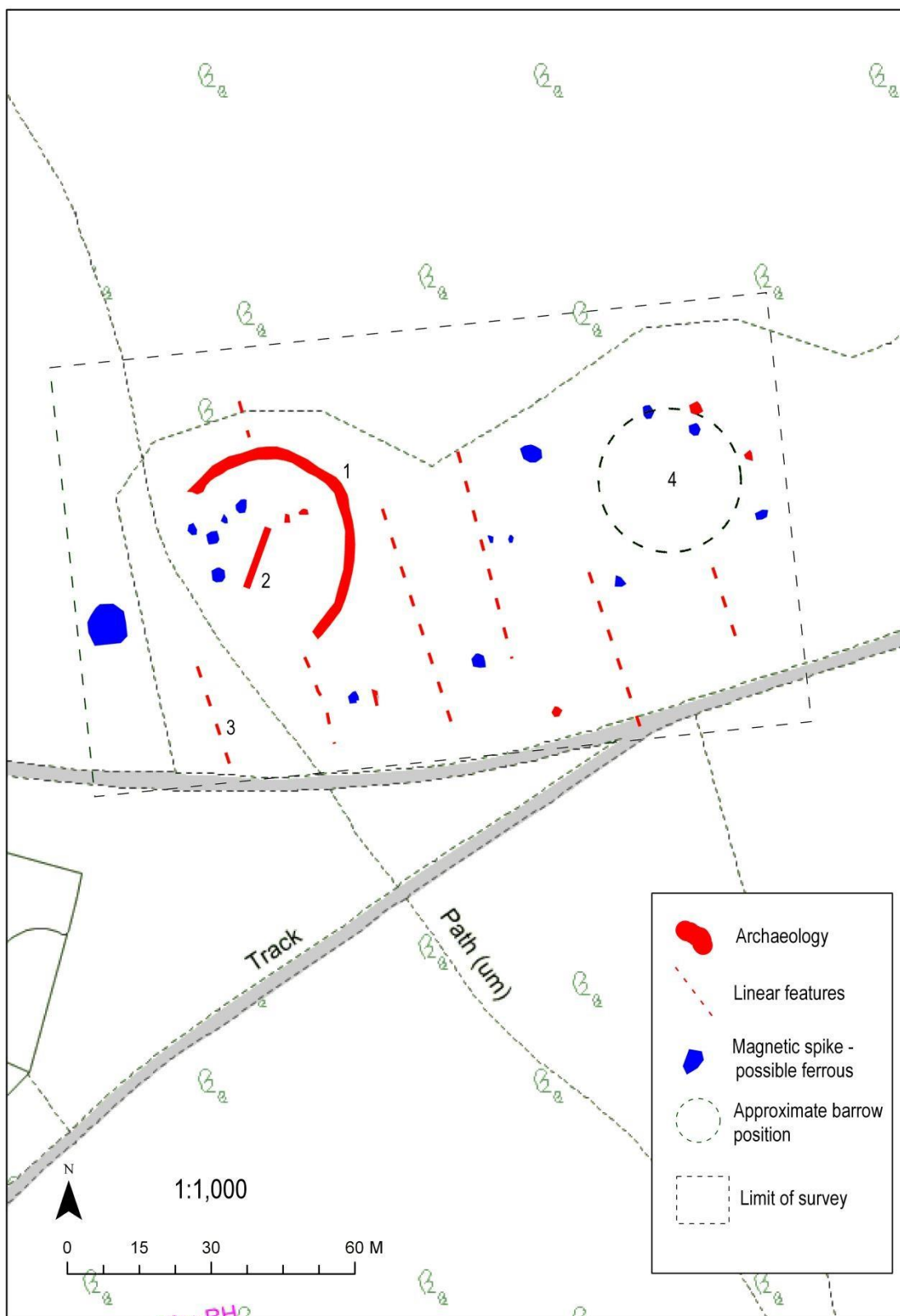


Figure 39: Interpretation plot of gradiometer survey

Madley, Herefordshire (PRN395)

The details for this now destroyed site at Upper Chilstone House, Madley, Herefordshire are slight. The barrow was recorded as 19m in diameter with a bank 3.6m wide and was located near to another supposed 'fancy' barrow, a supposed bell barrow (PRN396). This proposed disc barrow along with the bell barrow were dismissed by Grinsell (1993, 304) as Wessex types but no alternative classification was offered.

Shooting Box Barrow (PRN198)

The Shooting Box barrow at Long Mynd, Shropshire has been variously described as a disc barrow (Watson 2002) and more recently as a bell-disc barrow (Dinn *et al* 2004) but neither description is quite suitable. The absence of a ditch makes the strict interpretation of Shooting Box as a bell-disc or disc barrow untenable. The disturbances at the barrow make faithful reproduction of the mound difficult but enough survives to discount the attribution as that of a 'classic' disc barrow (Figs 40-1).



Figure 40: Shooting Box round barrow, Long Mynd, Shropshire

The site consists of a large central mound, c.20m in diameter, and rising to a height of c.1.7m within an annular bank, separated by a berm. The bank has an external

diameter of c.59m and up to 8m in width, surviving to a height of 0.45m at its best preserved eastern section. The width of the bank is greater than that reported by Dinn *et al* (2004) and is presumably due to spreading. A trackway runs through the bank as indicated on the plan. The mound has been cut into on the eastern side to provide shelter for shooting some time before 1882 (Cobbold 1904). By the time of Cobbold's visit in 1895, the eastern hollow had been converted into a shooter's hut and a further cutting was made into the northern face. This must have been relatively recent as Cobbold was able to record that the structure of the mound was of earth (*ibid* p39). Latterly a roofed concrete structure was erected in the eastern hollow in the 1950's before being removed by the National Trust in 1992 which afforded the opportunity for small scale excavation work on the mound and a section of the bank (Dinn *et al* 2004).

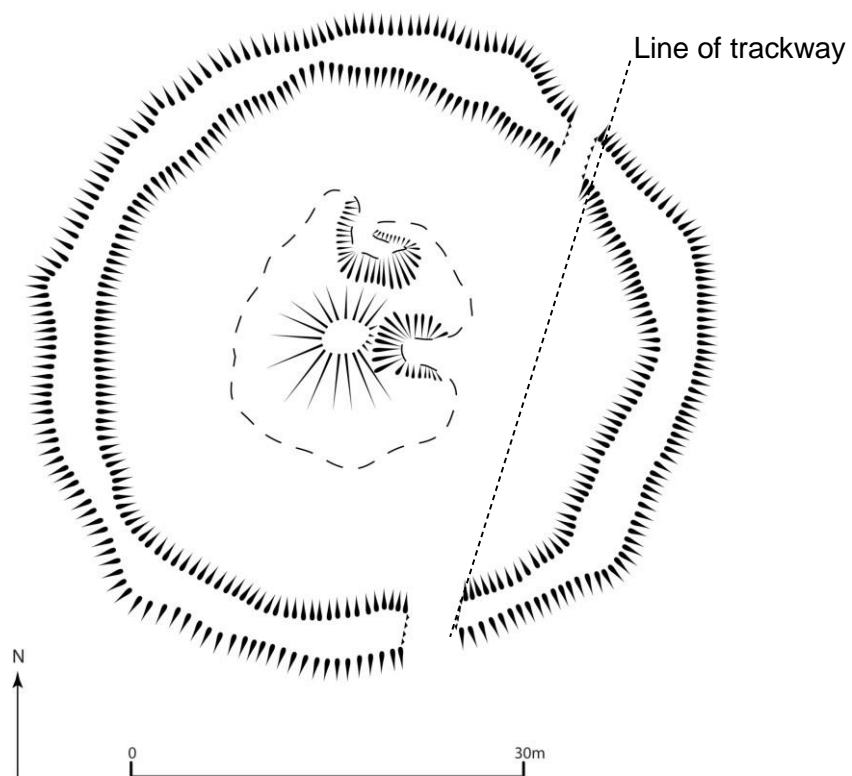


Figure 41: plan of Shooting Box round barrow, Long Mynd, Shropshire. (plan by author)

These excavations show that at least part of the ground surface beneath the barrow was stripped of its turf, followed by an episode of burning which resulted in a charcoal layer up to 0.01m in depth. Radiocarbon dating of *Betula* charcoal from this layer produced date ranges of 1940-1690 cal BC (OxA-5080; 3495±45 BP) and 1890-1640

cal BC (OxA-5081; 3445±45 BP) and provide a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the barrow mound. The mound was then constructed of soil in layers, the excavators identifying five distinct horizons. One of these, the third layer up from the charcoal layer, contained several turf lines, perhaps representing the turf removed prior to the burning event. This is in contrast to Ashbee's (1960, 45) observation that the stripped top-soil or turf was usually placed over the grave. Here it seems material was gathered from elsewhere to provide the initial mound material before the turf was replaced. A section through the bank shows it was constructed by the deposition of a clay loam directly over the stripped soil. No trace of a ditch was detected in the section and neither a 1991 contour survey nor the survey conducted by the author detected signs of a ditch, although dense heather cover made the task difficult. The lack of a ditch suggests material was brought from elsewhere rather than formed by upcast. The recent survey also confirms Dinn's suggestion that the bank does not form a true circle and that this may indicate that it was constructed in short, straight sections. A possible post hole of uncertain date cut the main bank material on the inner circumference but the significance of this may be lessened due to its position close to the track and may represent a former boundary. No radiocarbon dates were obtained from the bank, thus making it difficult to identify the sequence of construction for the mound and bank.

The attribution of this site as a disc barrow is a result of attempting to fit barrow morphology into the accepted classes which were formulated in Wessex although the dates do fit the period such barrows were constructed (Garwood 2007a, 41). It is perhaps reasonable then to suggest a more local explanation that of enclosing space by the construction of a circular bank, in effect akin to a ring cairn. Examples of this type can be found on the Long Mynd itself and to the east at Titterstone Clee Hill, also in Shropshire. The presence of the mound may well be a later addition, a transformation of the site after its purpose changed, but this remains speculation.

3.7.8 Variant circles

The variety of stone built monuments which appear to encompass elements of both standard cairns and barrows on the one hand, and stone circles on the other, have been described and analysed in some detail (Lynch 1973; 1979). Termed by Lynch (1973) variant circles, the principal classes are ring cairns, kerb circles and cairn circles, although platform cairns and kerb cairns are considered linked. Lynch

suggests that with the exception of the platform and kerb cairn, these unrounded monuments represent something other than simple burial places, instead their primary function may have been ceremonial (Lynch 1979, 5; 2000, 127). Field identification of these monuments can be difficult, especially as the robbing or disturbance of stone can mask or reveal structural regularity, and it has been argued that Lynch's scheme may be too complex (Leighton 1984).

An unusual variant on the theme not covered by Lynch's classification can be found on the main ridge of the Stiperstones, a dramatic ridge of frost shattered quartzite tors in Shropshire. Here a ring of stone c.10m in diameter encloses a natural stone outcrop, a practice found more commonly in the south-west (Grinsell 1978). A non-funerary interpretation for this type of monument has been posited by Tilley (1996, 172) who envisages a desire to capture, control and appropriate the embedded power of these distinctive rocks.

3.7.9 Ring cairns

Ring cairns at their most reductive can be described as a circular bank or ring of stone, commonly up to 2m wide, surrounding a hollow central area. A variety of structural choices have been recognised, in particular the use of upright stones and kerbing although in many cases this could probably only be applied to excavated examples (Lynch 1979, 2). Within the borderlands there are 42 records for probable and possible ring cairns, with one of these (PRN19187) possibly a duplicate. It is likely that some of the listed ring cairns are likely to be misidentifications. Recorded sizes range from 5-30m, similar to the range identified for standards barrows and cairns (Fig 42). The smaller examples may be misidentifications, probably of hut circles or kerb cairns. Structural complexity of the kind found at Brenig 44, Denbighshire (Lynch 1993, 117-43) is absent from the two partially excavated examples in the borderlands. Both appear to be formed of large stones with no apparent kerbing, although the interior of the ring cairn at Selattyn Hill, Shropshire, was comprised of a floor of rounded stones (Hannaford 1998).

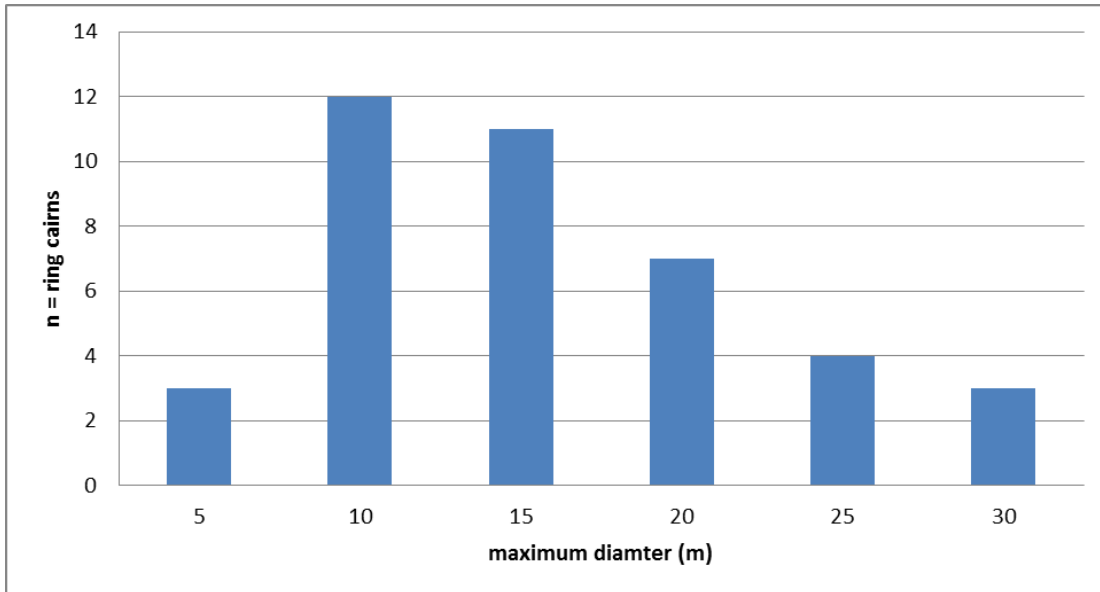


Figure 42: diameters of ring cairns

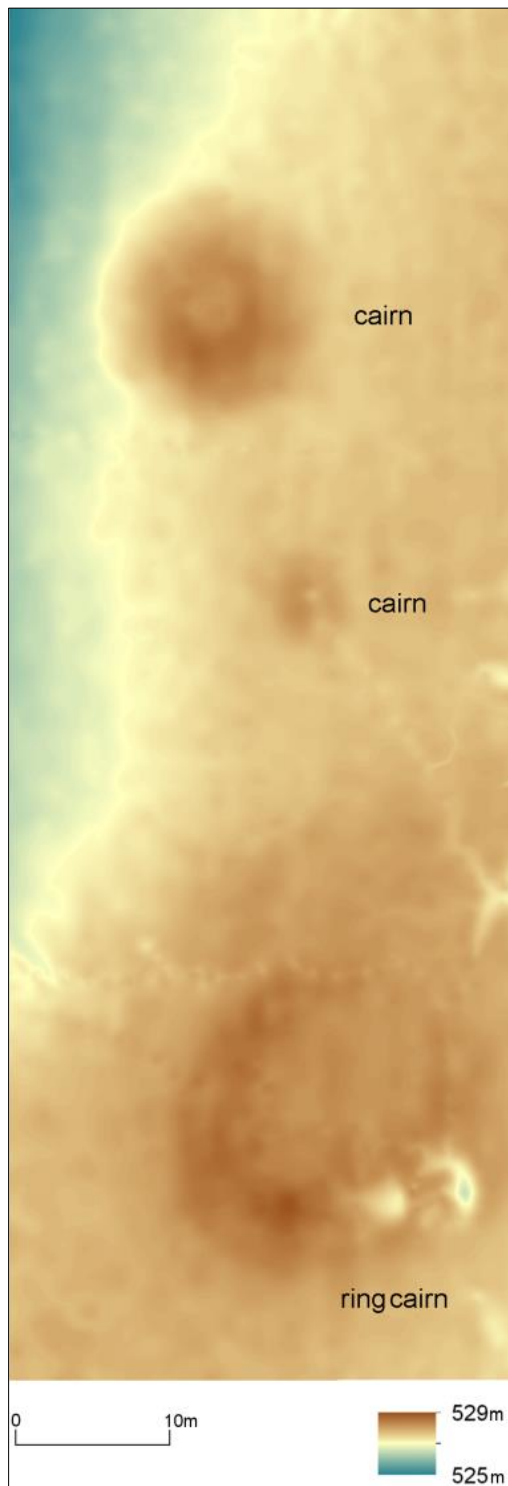
Ring cairns are a widely distributed if sparse tradition across the borderlands. As is probably to be expected they are a feature of the uplands to the west although the curious Kempsey barrows (detailed above) may yet prove to extend this tradition eastwards. There are loose concentrations in the Berwyn Mountains, the Shropshire hills and the uplands to the east of the river Ithon near Llandrindodd Wells; elsewhere they are relatively isolated from other examples. Frequently they are found paired with other barrows and cairns or form part of a group of monuments (Lynch (1973, 68), although this phenomena is not restricted to ring cairns. Conjoined ring cairns on the Long Mynd, Shropshire (PRN 1241), if they are indeed ring cairns and not hollowed out barrows, would appear to be unique for the region. Although burials can be found within these monuments, it has been suggested that their role was primarily ritual or ceremonial in nature rather than sepulchral, involving the deposition of charcoal in pits within the open central area (Lynch 1979, 9).



Figure 43: The partially excavated ring cairn on Titterstone Clee Hill as seen from the summit ring cairn

As with other types of cairns and barrows, the ring cairn is not necessarily a static form and a change in function may have accompanied a change in use; a ring cairn at Mynydd Epynt in Breconshire for example was converted into a barrow (Dunning 1943). The three ring cairns atop Titterstone Clee Hill illustrate the modification of ring cairns well. The westerly summit cairn of Titterstone (PRN 1882 Fig 45), although much mutilated with the eastern quadrant removed, encloses what may have been a small, standard cairn. Sixty metres to the east, what appeared to be a platform cairn (PRN 3299; Fig 43) c.22m in diameter was partially excavated in 1932 (O'Neil 1934). This revealed a ring of large basalt blocks packed in clay. The clay extended to the interior of the ring through which an eccentrically placed pit was later dug from which a piece of flint was recovered from the upper fill. No cremations or further pits were found. At some later point a further layer of soil was placed both within and without the ring. This soil layer, in effect creating a platform, may have been added to transform the role of the ring cairn. Alternatively the covering of the ring could effectively 'close' the site, thus bringing to an end its use in ritual or ceremonial practices. To the south east of the massif of Titterstone Clee Hill on the Hoar Edge ridge, a ring cairn (PRN 1260) c.22m diameter lies a few meters to the south of a pair of cairns (Fig 44). This cairn appears to be unaltered apart from some minor

disturbance. It may be that the original focus of activities was on Titterstone Clee Hill but subsequently moved to Hoar Edge, suggested by the modification of the former and the unaltered nature of the latter.



It is noteworthy that unlike the other two 'standard' cairns on the Hoar Edge ridge which occupy a false crest position, the siting of the ring cairn lies away from the edge, thus, in effect hidden from the valley. This lack of conspicuity for ring cairns has been noted previously (Lynch 1973, 66) but it is just as likely in some cases that the low height of ring cairns exaggerates this effect. The siting of ring cairns do appear to show some regional variety. Ward's (1988, 159) observation that ring cairns in south-west Wales and the Gower are often overlooked from higher ground and avoid locations which offer wide horizons may also hold true for ring cairns to the west of the borderlands. Here lower hillslopes are the favoured sites such as those on the western and eastern flanks of the Berywn Mountains, the Carneddau (PRN 1094, 38699) and Aberedw Hill (PRN 80673). Further to the east though ring cairns can be found on summits such as at Selattyn Hill (PRN 347), Titterstone and the Long Mynd.

Figure 44: Digital Terrain Model of the Hoar Edge ring cairns



Figure 45: The summit ring cairn on Titterstone Clee Hill looking north to Brown Clee Hill, Shropshire

3.7.10 Kerb cairns

Kerb cairns are small in diameter and are differentiated from standard small cairns by the use of disproportionately large kerb stones in relation to the area covered by the cairn and its height. When excavated they often cover a burnt surface and cremated bone (Lynch 1979, 5). There are nine recorded kerb cairns within the HER records and with the exception of the Moelfre Hill cairn (PRN 70371) in the Radnorshire Hills, their distribution is a northern one with a small concentration on the Berwyn mountains. The cairns on Eglwyseg, Denbighshire (Silvester & Hankinson 1995) demonstrate the form well. Although there is some disturbance to the interior and the east side of cairn A (PRN 101620), the remainder is comprised of 8 stones forming a cairn with an interior diameter of 4m. Cists have been identified in kerb cairns elsewhere (Ritchie *et al* 1975) and despite there being no excavated examples in the borderlands, the two edge set slabs within the interior of the disturbed kerb cairn at Cefn Panagored, Denbighshire (PRN 19580) is suggestive that cists may be also be an element of kerb cairns here. Proximity to other cairns is a recurring factor (Lynch and Ritchie 1975), the Eglwyseg kerb cairns are 12m apart and close to a ring cairn, those at Cefn Panagored, Denbighshire (PRN 19580, 105142) are similarly close albeit to other cairn types. Associations with other forms of monuments are not uncommon (Lynch & Ritchie 1975, 31-2), demonstrated by the Cerrig Beddau cairn, situated c.40m to the north east of the Rhos-y-beddau stone circle and avenue on the eastern flanks of the Berwyn mountains (Grimes 1963, 120-2). Association may not equate to contemporaneity though; kerb cairns at Brenig, Denbighshire (Lynch 1993, 96-101) and Argyll, Scotland (Ritchie *et al* 1975) seem to suggest construction during the Middle Bronze Age and places this form of cairn towards the end of the round barrow and cairn tradition.

3.7.11 Platform cairns

Platform cairns are low, flat platforms of stone that comprise a broad ring of stone, with a relatively small central area (Lynch 1993, 113-16). The distinction between platform cairns and ring cairns lies with the relative dimensions of the ring to the interior and the infilling of the central area in the case of the former, which may contain burials (Fig 46). The central area may be difficult to distinguish in unexcavated examples, especially where both the ring and central fill are of stone. The demarcation is easier to spot if materials other than stone are used for the fill, or

if the central area has been demarcated by the use of kerbing on the rings inner circuit.

There are nine possibilities for platform cairns, one of which, the New House cairn, Powys (PRN 409), has been rejected outright by CPAT fieldworkers as a probable farm building base. Others are difficult to assess as they are destroyed or lost such as Plas Nantyr cairn A (PRN 101020) or their structural details may suggest other possibilities which cannot be elucidated by field observation alone. The difficulty in assessing such sites is illustrated by the site at Garw Fynedd, Denbighshire (PRN 100761). Here a large raised platform c.20m diameter is surmounted by a ring bank around its circumference. Ellis Davies (1929, 108) was informed that the site was used as a cock fighting pit in the 19th century and this may explain the ring bank, although the farmer's assertion that the interior had been subsequently filled casts an element of doubt on this being a platform cairn. The presence of a platform does not guarantee that such a site will be a platform cairn. The site at Cae'r y Mynach cairn, Powys (PRN 3011) is a large platform surmounted by modern clearance but the entry in the RCAHMW volume recounts how a chamber and porch were emptied. This, allied to its position in a river valley is suggestive of something other than a platform cairn.

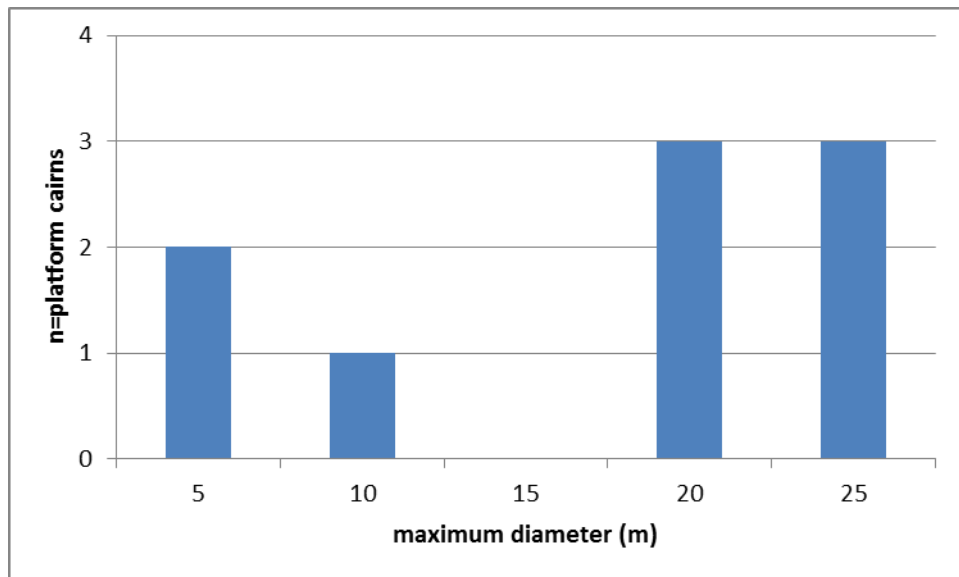


Figure 46: Diameters of platform cairns

More likely examples include the large platform cairns at Cefn Ty Mawr, Powys (PRN 3011) and Moel Ty-uchaf, Denbighshire (PRN 100848), 600m to the south-east of the more famous stone circle on a spur of the Berwyn Mountains. Neither of these cairns

are entirely straight forward. The former has what appears to be an entrance leading to the interior (RCAHMW 1997, 105) whilst the latter is curious in that elements of a kerb to the north and west, and a ring bank to the south west appear to be on different arcs (Jones 1999), suggesting perhaps reuse or remodelling. The platform, with a diameter of c.16m, stands 0.5m above the ground surface and the use of quartz in both the kerb and the ring bank has been noted (ibid). A second cairn (PRN 101322), in appearance that of a circular raised platform with a disturbed centre, lies to the south-west of this cairn but at 5m diameter is considerably smaller. A third large (Ø23m), convincing platform cairn on the Berwyns is situated on the summit of Cadair Bronwen, 3km to the south-east. Although superficially similar in morphological characteristics to ring cairns, Lynch (1993) has suggested that platform cairns have more in common with round barrows and cites their relative isolation as a commonality.

3.8 Distinctive constructional features (ditches and banks)

It is difficult and perhaps futile to place many of the barrows described above into rigid predetermined classes. Examination of the descriptions of round barrows rather than the classifications provided by the HER records makes it possible to identify further examples of distinctive barrows. The problem with these sites is their ambiguity with regard to their banks and ditches and highlights the problems of classification with regard to external features only. As Lynch has argued for ring cairns with central mounds, it is impossible to determine the chronological relationship between mound and ring/bank without excavation but regardless of which came first, there exists an assimilation with the burial monument (Lynch 1973, 66). An example of this hybrid form can be found on a ridge of Stapeley Hill, Shropshire, to the north-west of Mitchell's Fold stone circle. Here a low mound with large stones suggesting a possible kerb is encircled by a bank separated from the mound by what appears to be a narrow berm (Figs 47-8). It has been suggested that it may be the remains of a robbed out cairn although this is unlikely, the mound and ring appearing too well defined for this.

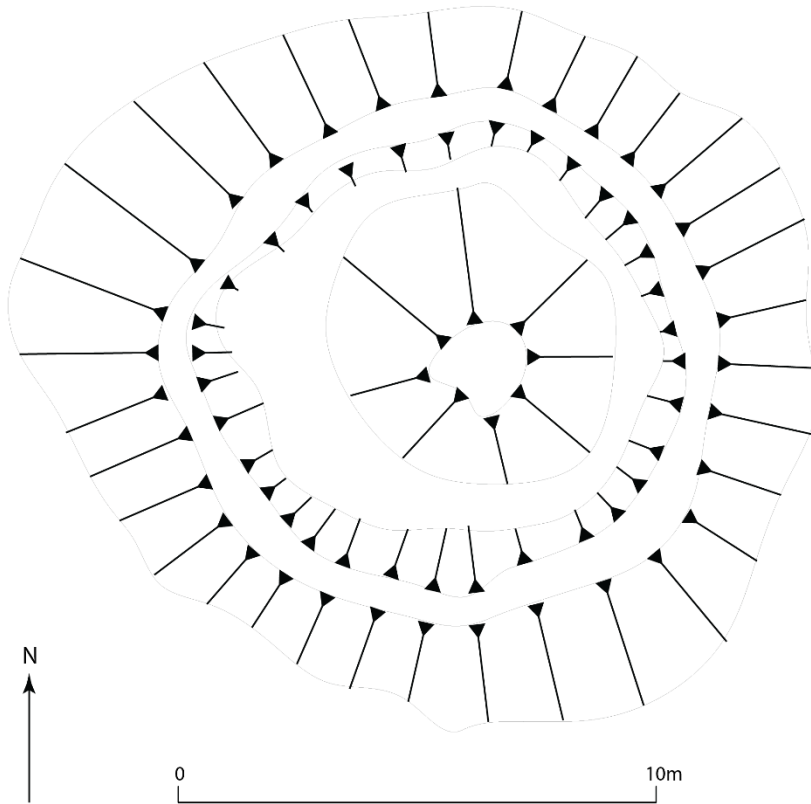


Figure 47: plan of cairn on Stapeley Hill, Shropshire (source: author)



Figure 48: The cairn on Stapeley Hill, Shropshire, looking north up the ridge.

Ditches have long been considered as little more than quarries to provide material for barrow mounds (see for example Ashbee 1960, 45). More recent work has highlighted the significance of the ditch in demarcating space and acting as a receptacle for deposits and artefacts (Lewis 2007, 79; Nowakowski 2007, 99), yet it would seem that the majority of extant barrows do not have visible ditches. Nearby counties for which such data readily exists show that ditches were visible at 9% of Somerset round barrows (Grinsell 1969; 1971) and just 5% of the Gloucestershire round barrows (O'Neil and Grinsell 1960; Darvill and Grinsell 1989). These figures are comparable with the borderlands in that 54 ditches, or 5%, have been identified either at extant barrows or by excavation, geophysical survey or aerial photography, in the case of the latter this is specifically related to mounded sites rather than ring ditches. It is clear then that ditches are by no means a certain feature of round barrows although the lack of a visible ditch cannot be taken as evidence that no ditches are, or were, present at a site. Ditches may have been covered by later mound aggrandisement (PRN50644 Trelystan Barrow I - Britnell 1982, 145-59); the ditch may be filled by the mound spreading over time (Hindwell Ash PRN307- Gibson 1999, 23) or the slight nature of the evidence may have led to their being missed by fieldworkers. The inner circuits of multiple ditches will have been covered by later mound expansion and are observable only by excavation, geophysical survey and aerial photography (e.g. Four Crosses site 5 PRN 50517 (Warrilow *et al* 1986, 63-8). The presence of a ditch does not appear to be related to mound dimensions. Barrows with ditches can be as small as 6m such as the barrow at Titley, Herefordshire (PRN 6199) or in the case of Cefn-Coch barrow in the Vale of Clwyd, Denbighshire (PRN 101923) up to 40m. The barrows with multiple ditches are found at the larger end of the size range encompassing diameters of 21-40m. This is to be expected as multiple ditches are the result of expansion activities at the barrow following the initial construction.

The assumption that ditches are primarily restricted to barrows in lowland environments does not appear to hold true within the borderlands. Ditched mounds and cairns can be found on high summits (Moel Gyw-PRN 100886), Vivod Mountain-PRN100982), ridges (Moel Y Wan Cairn A- PRN100933) and upland valleys (Ysgwennant- PRN100993). The summit of Hergest Ridge in Herefordshire has a number of cairns, recorded as clearance cairns during the Marches Uplands Survey (Dinn 1995) although ditches are apparent at two sites (Fig 49). The large blocks of stone within the ditched enclosures may indeed be more recent clearance episodes,

yet smaller more uniformly regular stone visible beneath the larger blocks may form a base or platform at the cairn adjacent to the trig point (PRN48816).

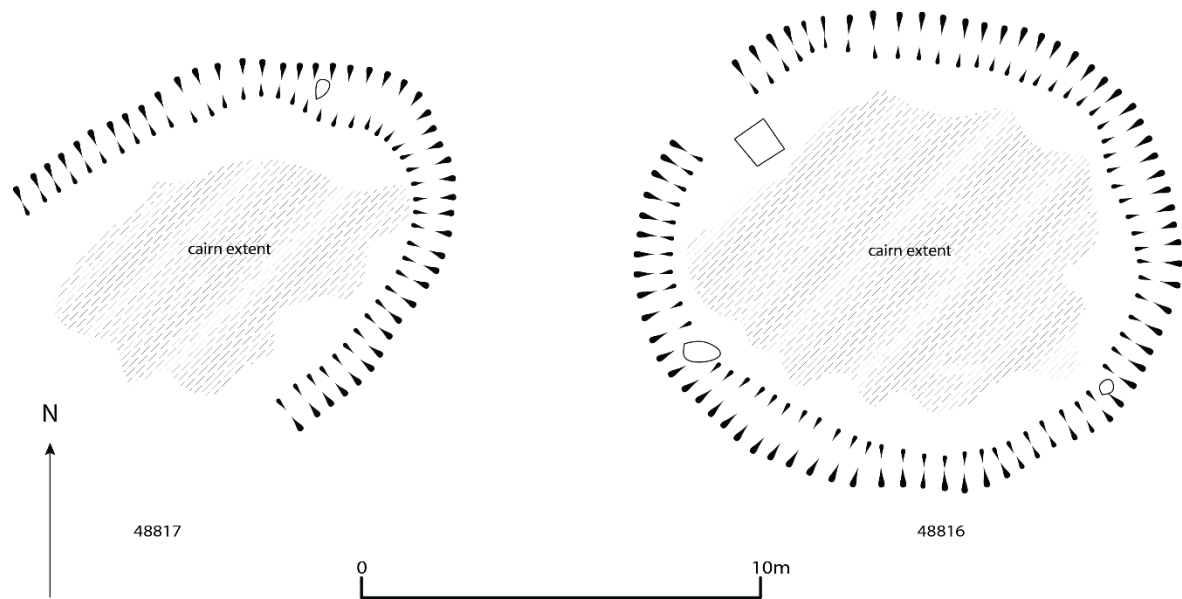


Figure 49: Ditches around cairns 48816, 48817 on Hergest Ridge, Herefordshire

The presence of both bank and ditch around round barrows in the borderlands is rare and not without problems. A barrow at Coed Bell, Flintshire (PRN102236) has a ditch and outer bank as does Esclusham Mountain Cairn B, Wrexham (PRN100041) although there is a suggestion in the latter case that these may be modern. Similarly there is uncertainty as to whether the ditch and external bank (which was not identified by Ellis-Davies - 1929, 212) at St. Elmo's Summerhouse mound I, Flintshire (PRN102221) are later embellishments, but the identification of a further ditch on an aerial photograph may suggest early origins for these features. It is unlikely that the paucity of round barrows with ditches and banks is solely a consequence of preservation. A barrow pair on Gorslydan, Powys demonstrates the selection of constructional choices available. Here the northern barrow (PRN1963) has a rounded profile with bank and ditch, whilst its neighbour is flat topped and has a ditch but no bank. Clearly topography and underlying geology are not the prime factors determining the form such monuments take. This is further reinforced when considering other barrow pairs; the combination of the ditchless 'bell' barrow and its smaller ditched neighbour has already been mentioned and a further upland example can be found at Trelystan, Powys (Britnell 1982).

3.9 Ring ditches

Ring ditches may be broadly defined as ‘...more or less circular or oval enclosure-ditches indicated by depressions in the ground or by marks in crops or soils’ (Case 1963, 36). They are occasionally geometrically perfect and may have internal features which are likely to be pits. Although the majority are discovered by aerial photography, increasingly they may be identified as magnetic anomalies during geophysical surveys.

Ring ditches present perhaps the greatest difficulty in dealing with probable Early Bronze Age sites. Indeed even the name has been problematic since it was coined by Leeds (1936). They are generally assumed to represent the remains of round barrows, destroyed by ploughing or erosion with the displaced mound material infilling the enclosing ditches. Conflating all ring ditches with Early Bronze Age barrows however is unwise as ditches that produce identical crop-marks can represent a variety of circular features and vary widely in date (Wilson 2000, 104-15).

Atkinson (1942, 34) preferred to reserve the term ring ditch for a distinct class of originally un-mounded non-burial sites. These would be used for ritual or ceremonial purposes before burial in a nearby barrow, in part the lowland equivalent of ring cairns if Lynch’s (1979) interpretation is correct. This definition can only be assigned to fully excavated sites and does not seem to have been taken up in the literature and is not used here.

Smith (1972) estimated that only 25-26 of the excavated ring ditches (representing some 40% of the total) considered by Case in Oxfordshire could be considered barrows i.e. there was some evidence for the former presence of a mound. However, it does not follow that the remaining 60% of the ring ditches should be entirely discounted. Case (1963, 39-48) indicated that some ditches may have had small internal mounds too distant from the encircling ditches to have provided material for the ditch fills and many more of the ring ditches had features or finds indicating Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age activity (Case 1963, 41-7). Even if it appears a ring ditch was originally un-mounded, this cannot always be assumed. At Willington Quarry, Derbyshire (Beamish 2001, 10) the sealing of a ring ditch and interior ground surface by alluvium suggested to the excavator that no mound had been present. However, this explanation may not account for the early destruction of a slight mound by ploughing before the onset of alluviation. There is some evidence for mound

truncation during the Iron Age at Sharpstones Site A, Shropshire (Barker *et al* 1991, 21-6) and in the case of Willington Quarry the alluvial layer was undated.

An initial search of the HER data returned 278 records for ring ditches. Upon examination of the entire dataset provided by the counties it was apparent that many ring-ditches had been attributed as round barrows in the primary classification, most often with no corroborating evidence. Once these records had been reclassified and obvious non-Early Bronze Age examples removed, 528 ring ditches were recorded onto the database. This is a provisional number as many ring ditches are grouped together into one HER entry. Where possible these have been separated out and given their own entries within the database.

It is not possible to give an accurate summary of the dimensions of ring ditches in the borderlands as 299, or 57% of the 529 sites have no recorded diameters. From the information available it is possible to say that diameters extend from 5m to 100m, with the majority in the 10-30m range, this trend being broadly comparable with that of bowl barrows and cairns (Figs 50-1). Again, it is instructive to consider the anomalous examples. The most likely explanation for the large ring ditch south of Croft Castle, Herefordshire may be that of an afforestation circle visible on the 1st Edition OS map and related to the grounds of the Croft estate. The large ring ditch (Ø 100m) at Walton court Farm, Powys, was initially considered to be a Roman Gyrus or more recently a formative henge (Burrow 2010, 188). A recent small scale excavation across the ditch failed to find evidence for a bank, either internal or external (Jones 2010). The ditch was comparatively narrow and shallow and a date of 2570-2310 cal BC (3945±35BP SUERC-26430) albeit from a secondary ditch fill, lies outside of the range of the so called formative henges. As part of the same survey into large ring ditches, two trenches were placed across the large ring ditch (Ø 55m) at Causeway Lane, Llanymynech in Powys (Jones 2011). Again the ditch width was relatively narrow in comparison to its diameter and the excavator interpreted the sequence of infilling of the ditch as evidence for an internal bank. No cultural features were recovered although radiocarbon dates may be forthcoming. The true nature of these sites has yet to be determined but it is probable that such large ring ditches are Late Neolithic ceremonial monuments akin to the henge tradition with constructional, perhaps regional, variations. Although ring ditches over 30m in diameter are rare, their status as round barrows or other Early Bronze Age ceremonial sites should not be ruled out. On the outskirts of Mold, close to where the Mold cape was discovered,

a dispersed group of round barrows, including a large example at over 30m diameter (PRN100056), and ring ditches straddle the river Alyn. Within the interior of the Pentrehobyn ring ditch (Jones 2011) an eccentrically placed ditch contained substantial oak timbers, probably a coffin, radiocarbon dated to 2400-2130 cal BC (3810±30BP SUERC-32382). This was a large ring ditch 44m in diameter but in contrast to the previous two examples, the width of the ditch was significantly wider at 4 metres.

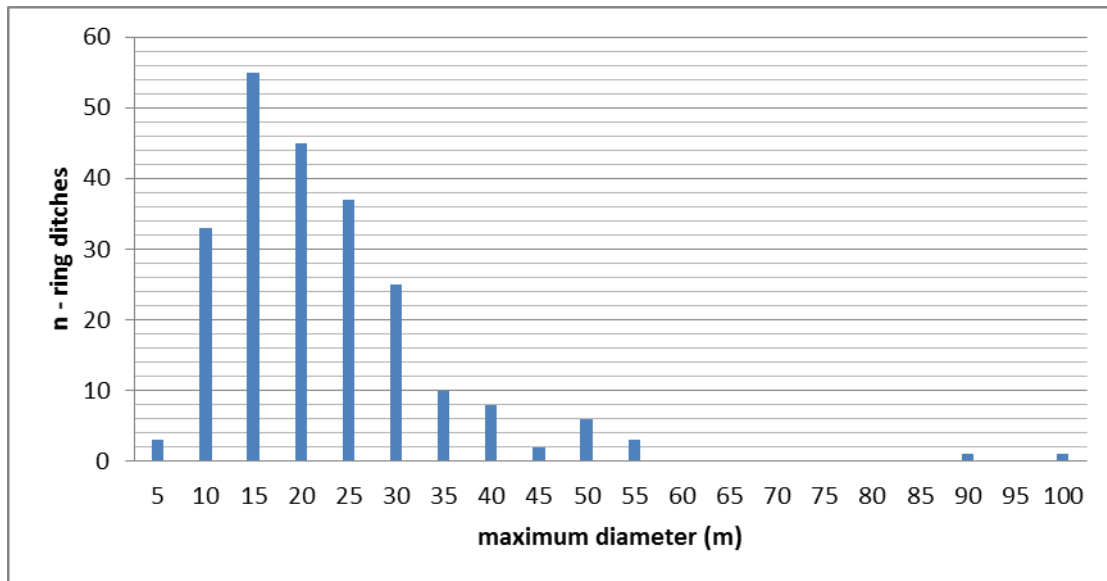


Figure 50: ring ditch diameters

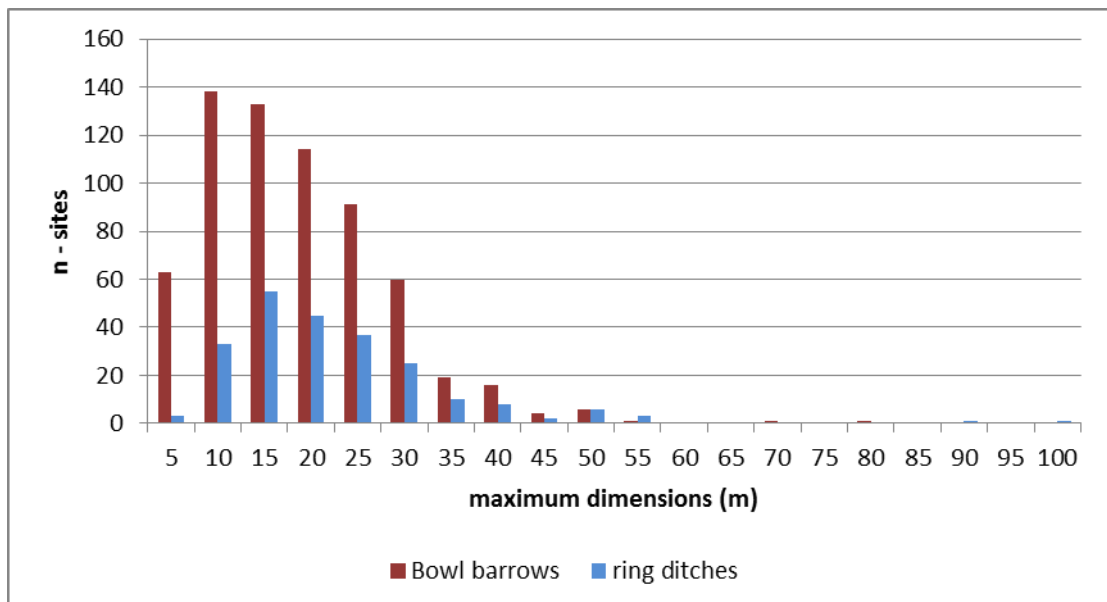


Figure 51: comparison of ring ditch and bowl barrow diameters

There are a small number of penannular ring ditches (18) within the database, some are most likely henges but other explanations are possible (Harding and Lee 1987). The smaller examples usually attract the term 'hengiform' but the presence of an

'entrance' does not preclude the ring ditch from being a barrow. In Shropshire, Bromfield B15 (PRN3953) had an entrance or causeway to the east with a cist just inside the circuit (Hughes *et al* 1995, 38-9) whilst excavated examples are known from elsewhere including Poole, Dorset (Case 1952) and Barrow Hills, Oxfordshire (Barclay and Halpin 1999, 133).

Although it seems that dealing with ring ditches is fraught with problems, a little more certainty can be provided when ring ditches occur in clusters. Large excavation projects elsewhere at Barrow Hills, Oxfordshire (Barclay and Halpin 1999) and Raunds, Northamptonshire (Harding and Healy 2007) have shown that such clusters are likely to be Early Bronze Age barrows, in some cases with Neolithic origins. This pattern has been replicated in the borderlands with excavations at ring ditch clusters at Four Crosses, Powys (Warrilow *et al* 1986), Holt, Worcestershire (Hunt *et al* 1986) and Bromfield, Shropshire (Stanford 1982; Hughes *et al* 1995).

3.10 Summary

This chapter has served to introduce the nature and distribution of round barrows and associated structures in the Anglo-Welsh borderlands. Whilst necessarily broad and introductory in nature, it is still possible to identify themes and this summary will highlight some of these.

Round barrows and cairns are widely but differentially distributed throughout the borderlands and are represented by different forms of evidence, i.e. extant mounds, documentary sources, place names, and crop and soil marks visible on aerial photographs. The highest densities of these monuments are located to the west in the upland regions whilst cropmark evidence possibly relating to destroyed sites lies to the east and in the major river valleys and tributaries which flow from the uplands. The presence or lack of upstanding monuments has been demonstrated to have a direct correlation with historical land use regimes, principally agricultural and industrial processes, but there is also an imbalance with regard to previous research. The uplands have benefitted from several large scale projects and the enthusiasm and meticulous recording of early fieldworkers in certain counties. Yet there is also some differentiation within the barrow distribution of the upland regions as the analysis of barrow location with regard to altitude has highlighted. The peak in the number of sites in the altitude range 350-500m would suggest both a relatively high number of

sites and good survival is in part a result of largely non-arable agricultural regimes. From this we would reasonably expect sites at altitudes above this range to benefit from the same levels of preservation. That fewer numbers of barrows are recorded as altitude increases is an indicator that these highest altitudes were less utilized for barrow construction rather than representing poor survival. An argument may be posited that such places were wild and harsh and thus less frequently visited, but conversely it may also suggest that these very highest regions held significance not afforded to other places precisely because of these qualities. At the other end of the topographic scale, the lowlands demonstrate a large number of sites but these are much more dispersed and concentrated mainly along the river valleys. This may be partly due to the suitability of these environments for cropmark formation and may not be an accurate reflection of past distributions. There is a conspicuous lack of barrows and cropmarks on the middle ground between these topographic extremes and whether this is a real distribution or not is difficult to ascertain. That said, the evidence from the placename data at the Berwyn Mountains may suggest that this apparent barrow 'dead zone' may well have been utilised although it would be unwise to extrapolate this to the whole of the borderlands. What we appear to be looking at with regard to the distribution of barrows in the borderlands is not a preference for upland environments but rather a record of the pattern of survival and destruction. Whilst it cannot be predicted what may be found in the future, it is entirely reasonable to suggest that the evidence presented here represents but a portion of what may have originally existed.

Analysis of the external appearance of round barrows provides only limited information in itself. Although there is a variety of form, particularly with cairns, there appears to be little variety amongst the earthen mounds. The morphological criteria applied to round barrows across Britain, formulated to make sense of round barrow forms in Wessex does not appear to have the same resonance in the borderlands. Whilst examples that have some of the characteristics of these 'fancy' barrows have been identified, few if any of these can be considered firmly within the Wessex tradition. The barrows listed by both the county HER and English Heritage as disc barrows, a supposedly well-defined barrow type has instead highlighted differences and ambiguity. Some have ditches, some do not, some are mounded, some not. The limited information available for the Madeley barrow makes any comparison difficult, but Grinsell (1993) doubted its veracity, whilst the Kempsey barrows have no surviving mounds making classification as disc-barrows similarly troublesome. Of

course it is possible that a slight mound which extended to the ditch once existed at the Kempsey monuments, creating in effect a saucer barrow, another of the Wessex types. Equally it could be that no mounds were ever raised within the enclosures, and that the Kempsey barrows may perhaps provide evidence of hybridity, in effect lowland variants of ring cairns. This local use of varied barrow constructional traditions seems to be borne out by the Shooting box barrow on the Long Mynd. Here it would seem there is a fusing of traditions, what appears to be a rather standard earthen bowl barrow in an upland environment but enclosed by a ditchless bank, reminiscent of ring cairns. There seems to be no topographic preference for this type of barrow, if indeed these examples could be considered as such. The Shooting Box barrow is situated on the watershed of the Long Mynd, the Kempsey Barrows are located in a false crest position overlooking the Severn Valley, whilst the Madeley barrow is in a broad river valley.

It may be more appropriate to consider parallels from elsewhere for some of the more unusual barrows mentioned above rather than trying to fit them into a preconceived tradition of Wessex round barrows. Alternatively there may be an argument that they should be considered on their own terms. The borderlands are well placed in that influences from both the west and the southeast may have manifested themselves through monumental structures but these were also sometimes manipulated, perhaps reinforcing a local identity. The banks at the Kempsey barrows are most likely of earthen construction formed by upcast from the ditches but may echo the tradition and purpose of the upland ring cairns of which the Shropshire Hills examples have hitherto appeared to be the most eastern manifestations. It is certainly clear however that local geology alone is not a determinant of barrow form; the Shooting Box mound and bank were constructed of earth in an upland landscape of stone. Parallels for this form of large mound with a berm and raised bank can be found on Bodmin Moor but they are constructed from stone (Johnson and Rose 2008). The form of the two supposed bell barrows similarly deviate from the classic 'Wessex' morphology in that neither have berms at ground level and appear to be without ditches, suggestive again of localised interpretations of established forms.

This brief discussion on barrow morphology has been largely concerned with the small number of seemingly anomalous barrow types but it should be remembered that the vast majority of round barrows appear little more than amorphous mounds, albeit of widely varying size. These seemingly simple mounds often cover an internal

complexity and diversity that belies their outward appearance, at least in their modern, denuded and vegetation covered state.

There are numerous uncertainties associated with unexcavated ring ditches which make many forms of macro analysis problematic. It is likely that a significant proportion of the ring ditches represent the ploughed remains of round barrows but there is also some question over whether all were originally mounded. They may therefore represent another form of monument, possibly akin to ring cairns or something else altogether. Although it may be prudent to concentrate solely on ring ditch clusters due to the favourable results from excavation, the prevalence of isolated barrows in the borderlands suggests caution before dismissing single ring ditches in the lowlands.

There is a further consideration when assessing round barrow morphology and distributions, namely the instances of distinctive barrow features, in particular ditches. Whilst ring ditches are common in the lowlands, the number of extant barrows with ditches is markedly opposite. Two suggestions may be considered to explain this disparity. The first is the possibility of obscuration through ploughing, barrow aggrandizement or oversight. The second, intriguing possibility, is that of choice in barrow construction. It has been shown that topographical considerations alone do not account for the decision to dig a ditch, ditched and unditched barrows can be found in pairs in upland locations for example. Conversely, it cannot be taken for granted that only ditched round barrows were built in the river valleys, barrows with no ditches would leave little to be identified if the mounds were ploughed away. It may well be that the prevalence of ring ditches has led to the erroneous implication that most barrows originally had ditches. There is a further possible distinction between upland and lowland barrow settings in that ring ditches often occur in tight clusters whilst barrows are more dispersed.

This chapter then has focused on the readily available data from a variety of sources. Analysis at this macro scale has revealed a landscape of a widespread, dispersed but most likely incomplete record of Early Bronze Age monumentality. Broad patterns have emerged but the detail is hidden. To comprehend the rationale behind the siting of round barrows it is necessary to continue the examination at ever decreasing scales. This necessitates study at the meso scale, that is examining the landscape in which they inhabit and their relationship to other barrows and forms, before exploring

the complexity of round barrows at a micro scale, that which exists beneath the forms that are presented here.

Chapter 4: Investigating round barrow clusters

4.1 Introduction

Round barrow cemeteries of the type commonly found in regions such as Wessex are infrequent within the study area. The closest parallels appear to be that of the riverine settings of some of the ring ditch clusters, whilst in the case of extant monuments, the signature of the borderlands is that of single or paired barrows, with some small groupings consisting of three or four barrows. However, a number of clusters of relatively dense round barrow sites have been identified and this chapter will attempt to analyse some of these in closer detail.

The first section of this chapter details the rationale to the fieldwork conducted followed by a description of the method employed. The results of the fieldwork are then presented as a series of sub-chapters with details of the individual sites within the cluster and an appraisal of the nature of the cluster. A concluding section will address the themes that arose from the fieldwork.

4.2 Background

The term cemetery is most often used in relation to clusters of round barrows and cairns. This is problematic in that it presupposes that all round barrows are primarily funerary monuments, yet it has been demonstrated that this is not necessarily the case. For example, Jones (2005, 115) has suggested funerary activities were but a minor component of the actions performed at many round barrow sites in Cornwall and has highlighted the relative paucity of round barrows which contain human remains. For the purposes of this chapter the terms cluster, grouping and complex are used. A cluster may be regarded as a relatively dense concentration of round barrow sites although the cohesive nature of the cluster has not been demonstrated. The term grouping is perhaps more analogous to the cemetery, in that some form of relationship and cohesion is implied. This relationship may be based upon a number of factors including a shared topographic location and relative proximity to, and often visual relationships with, other round barrows. A complex is deemed to be a group comprised of sites of various forms which may include - but is not limited to - round barrows, stone circles, standing stones and extraction sites.

The analysis of round barrow cemeteries or groups has commonly been conducted at what may be termed a macro scale; typically this involves consideration of a number of cemeteries. This approach has proved useful in identifying patterning across landscapes, leading to theories of social organisation (Fleming 1971; Watson 1991; Tomalin 1993; Johansen *et al* 2004), the relationships of round barrows to other, often earlier, monuments (Woodward and Woodward 1996; Exon *et al* 2000; Rogers 2013) and underlying cosmological principles (Woodward & Woodward 1996; Field 1998; Exon *et al.* 2000; Watson 2001). However, Woodward's caveat (1996, 288) in her study of some of the Wessex groupings notes that that each region has its own characteristics. Thus the spatial arrangement, or 'ordered adjacency', of the linear groupings of southern England to reinforce genealogical principles (Garwood 1991, 15) may not be applicable to linear groupings elsewhere, or to other arrangements of round barrows. Indeed, in contrast to prevalent notions of cemetery formation, that of gradual organic growth from one generation to the next, Lynch (1993, 144) suggested that the group of monuments at Brenig were probably conceived as a single entity and built by one community. The grouping, with an average spacing of 500m or so, covered an area of 2-3 sq. km but Lynch considered the geography of the Brenig valley more important than the spacing of the monuments, with mounds set on prominent ledges and ridge-tops to ensure visibility from the valley or from other significant points such as the ring cairn.

Where discrete groupings are considered in their own right, this is usually as a result of excavation. Whilst excavation of whole or even part cemeteries is rare, notable exceptions, including Milton Keynes (Green 1974), Snail Down, Wiltshire (Thomas 2005), Barrow Hills, Oxfordshire (Barclay and Halpin 1999), Raunds, Northamptonshire (Harding and Healy 2007), Brenig, Denbighshire (Lynch 1993) and Stannon Down, Cornwall (Jones 2006) have provided valuable insight into the variety of funerary and ceremonial depositional practices and architectural choices both within and between such groupings. Within the study area, three groupings have been subject to excavation; Four Crosses, Powys (Warrilow *et al.* 1986); Bromfield, Shropshire (Stanford 1982; Hughes *et al.* 1995) and Holt, Worcestershire (Hunt *et al.* 1986).

In between the macro scale studies and those of the micro scale, that being excavated sites, there are very few closely detailed studies of barrow clusters or

groupings. Tilley (2004, 202) has suggested this may be due to “a kind of cherry-picking of significant sites, which basically means those which have been excavated, or well excavated, or extensively excavated. The results are then generalized to a region or a landscape or the whole of Britain.”

Although Tilley’s phenomenological approach to monumentality and landscapes (Tilley 1994; 1996; 2004) has been heavily critiqued (Fleming 1999; 2005; 2006; Brück 2005; Barrett & Ko 2009) his assertion that due to financial, practical, and political constraints on archaeological practice, it falls to fieldwork studies to investigate local, regional and inter-regional similarities and differences has merit. To illustrate such an approach Tilley (2004) considered the cluster of round barrows on the Ebbles-Nader ridge in Wiltshire. Although finding that intervisibility played little part in their placement, he suggested that the barrows, occupying every significant topographic element, were connected by their encapsulation of the landscape as a whole. The rationale for this, Tilley writes, may have been a cosmological imperative, a metaphor for the journey of life, with stages in the passage from life to death marked by round barrows at transitional topographic points.

Studies such as this demonstrate that even with an absence of excavated data, it is possible to construct an interpretive account of round barrow clusters based upon detailed fieldwork. However, as mentioned above, very few individual round barrow groupings have been analysed in detail and even fewer have been subject to fieldwork. As such there is little in the way of established methodologies with which to approach the problem, but two research projects in particular have been of use and aspects of these were incorporated into the present study. In their analysis of the Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments of the Topped Mountain region of County Fermanagh, Ireland, McHugh et al (2004) utilised Cooney’s (1990) criteria with which to define ‘ritual landscapes’ and expanded this to incorporate visibility from individual monuments (Tables 6-7). Inspired to some degree by Tilley, yet aware of potential criticisms of subjectivity, Andy Jones (2005) attempted to combine phenomenological approaches with what he described as “more traditional and perhaps more easily verifiable methods of fieldwork”(ibid. 40) at several round barrow clusters in Cornwall as part of his doctoral research. Jones’ rationale was an attempt to determine the underlying principles that led to cemetery formation by considering the integrity of clusters and their relationships to other monuments and the landscape.

Table 6: Criteria used by Cooney to recognise ritual landscapes in Ireland

Criterion
Distance between tombs
Orientation on a focal point
Presence of focal tomb(s)
Intervisibility between tombs
Defined area
Distinct topographical location
Tombs of the same typological class

Table 7: McHugh's Assessment of the view from individual monuments

Visibility Index	View	General guidelines for awarding visibility index value
4	Excellent	Where the monument was situated on a high peak with an uninterrupted panoramic view of the wider landscape.
3	Good	Where the immediate hinterland of the monument was visible and there was also a view beyond the immediate locale.
2	Fair	Where the immediate topographical hinterland, such as a valley basin or a hilltop plateau was clear, but there was no view beyond this.
1	Poor	Where a slope or permanent landscape feature in immediate proximity to the monument obscured the view from the site.

4.3 Methodology

The objectives of the fieldwork for this study were to record and analyse the landscape settings and relationships of round barrows and cairns within selected groupings. In particular it sought to address a number of problems raised by the identification of these clusters.

In the first instance the cohesion or integrity of the cluster needed to be examined; in effect, could the clusters be considered as discrete entities and if so, how was this achieved? If clusters could be interpreted as coherent groupings, this leads to the question of why they are present in a particular location. To answer this various factors needed to be considered, including the relationship to earlier and

contemporary monuments, non-monumental activity and the role of the landscape and its distinctive, or otherwise, topographic elements.

It is of course difficult to negotiate such questions at unexcavated sites. A persistent approach to these problems within studies of monumental siting is the notion of visibility and intervisibility (Woodward 2000; Cummings 2004; Gibson 2004). The consideration of visibility addresses the conspicuity or otherwise of the site in question but requires caution, as round barrows which might be considered highly visible landscape markers today may have as their origins much smaller cairns, their present form a result of later aggrandisement. Additionally it has been suggested that for certain round barrow locations views outwards from these places may have been more important than looking to them (Lewis, 2007, 80-82). It is unlikely, given the diminutive stature of many of the round barrows and cairns under consideration here, that such long views outwards were meant to be reciprocal, intervisibility was more likely to be a consideration within the cluster. Rather it may be that certain topographic elements needed to be referenced and indeed Gibson (2004, 157-8) has noted the recurring visibility of certain distinctive hills from many monuments within the Upper Severn Valley. As such then, the role of visibility in the siting of both the cluster and the individual sites within it was investigated in depth, with reference to natural as well as anthropogenic phenomena.

At an early stage of the research it was considered that a number of questions regarding positioning and visibility might be addressed by the use of analysis within a GIS (Lake and Woodman 2003; Conolly and Lake 2006; Chapman 2006). Although significant technical and methodological advances have allowed a number of new and innovative approaches to round barrow placement (Exon *et al* 2000; De Reu *et al* 2011; Bourgeois 2012), these are not without problems and trials identified a number of problems with this approach. In particular it was found that issues with data quality severely impacted on the research. In some cases it transpired that grid references were incorrect, most likely due to simple mistakes with transcription; at Upper House for example a HER grid reference placed a barrow some distance to the east in a valley when it was in fact on a ridge and is clearly described as such in the accompanying report. Additionally the HERs do not record the level of error associated with their grid references; the level of accuracy obtained from GPS devices can be in the region of 0.01m -10m.

A further consideration was the resolution of height data available from the OS - required for conducting viewshed analysis - which may be too coarse when dealing with certain terrain and sites. Digital contour accuracy values quoted for the Land Form Profile 1:10 000 dataset are “typically better than half the contour interval, that is ± 2.5 metres for areas with 5 metre vertical intervals and ± 5 metres for areas with 10 metre vertical” (Edina Digimap 2014). The development of Lidar survey and resultant high resolution Digital Terrain Models (DTM) addresses some of these problems (Liu 2008), but unless Lidar survey is specially commissioned, the coverage obtainable from the Environment Agency for the most part does not extend to the upland areas away from river catchments. It would thus still be necessary to visit each study site and ground truth the data. As such it was decided to only use GIS viewshed analysis in certain circumstances and these are detailed in the relevant sections. A viewshed is produced by querying the elevation data of all the individual DTM cells and reports the result as a binary map depicting which cells are visible and which are not. The viewsheds produced for some of the barrow clusters are multiple viewsheds; the logical union of two or more viewshed maps which combine viewsheds from multiple observer points.

4.3.1 The method.

The initial selection of sites to be examined was originally larger and encompassed clusters spanning the length of the borderland but access was refused on a number of occasions to sites in the north of the study area. Particularly problematic, and unfortunate for this study, were the clusters in Flintshire where the round barrows were located in enclosed fields. A certain degree of pragmatism ensued and some of the sites were chosen primarily because they were accessible. The final selection includes clusters (Fig 52) and whilst some are relatively close together, their varying character provides contrast and thus merits inclusion.

In the first instance the relevant data - site descriptions, grid references and basic interpretations - were obtained from the HER. Grid references were uploaded to a GPS device to locate and check the local accuracy of sites. In those circumstances where discrepancies were identified, the co-ordinates obtained during fieldwork were retained and uploaded to the project GIS database. Some sites listed on the HER were not at the grid references supplied. In these cases a wide search was made and the database and analysis was updated to reflect this.

Recording forms

A pro-forma recording form was designed to record observations in the field, a copy of which is included in the appendix. The rationale behind the form was the intention to produce a systematic approach to the recording of the sites, their relationship to each other and to the local topography.

Specifically, observations were directed to include;

- The morphology of the barrow and any constructional detail where possible
- the range and scope of visibility to and from the round barrows
- the level of intervisibility between round barrows
- the siting upon, and relationship with, the local macro and micro topography
- the visual and topographic relationships with other broadly contemporary sites

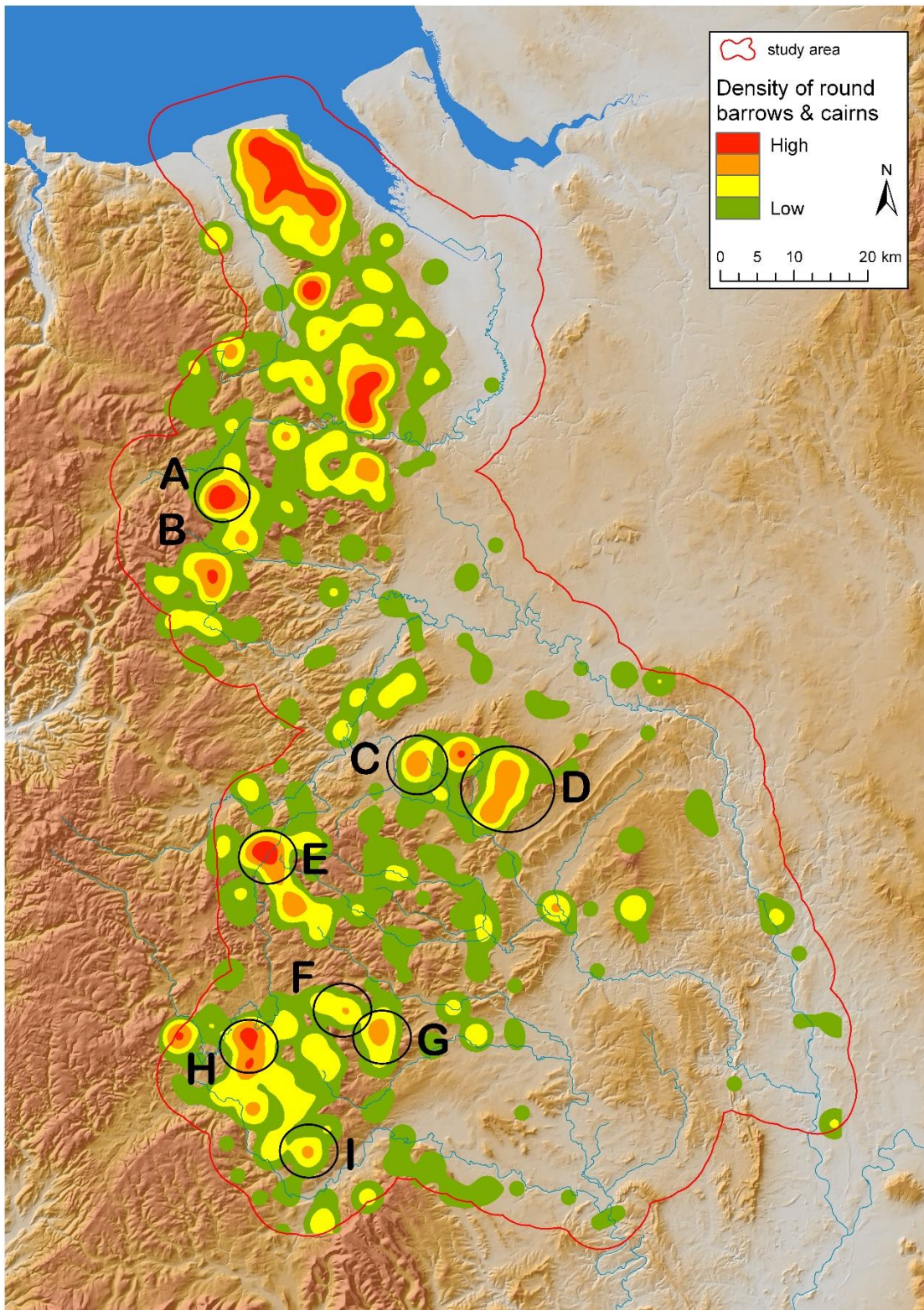


Figure 52: Filedwork locations of clusters A: Moel-ty-uchaf; B: Cefn Penagored; C: Corndon Hill; D: Long Mynd; E: Banc Gorddwr; F: Radnor Forest; G: Walton Basin; H: Upper House; I: Begwyns

4.3.2 The method in practice

Although the use of pro-forma sheets allowed for a systematic recording of individual sites, in practice the nature of the clusters and groupings, particularly with regard to their dispersal across sometimes large areas, meant that some flexibility was required. This necessitated repeat visits in order to approach individual sites or the entire grouping from different points within the landscape. In Jones' (2005) methodology, the observer would walk out from the site in the direction of the cardinal points and note the approximate distance where a site was no longer visible. In this study the directions walked were governed by other factors including the nature of the topography and the direction of other sites.

At each site the first task was to complete the initial sections of the form regarding locational accuracy, morphology and micro landscape settings. A sketch plan was then drawn from each site, augmented by photographs, detailing the extent and direction of views to the near and wider landscape. At this point the visibility or otherwise of the other barrows was noted where these could be easily identified. These were recorded as textual descriptions on the forms and as lines of sight on printed maps produced from the GIS. Where it was deemed a site should be visible from this location but could not be easily identified, particularly when dealing with small sites obscured by vegetation cover, this was resolved by a colleague locating the site whilst the recorder remained at the initial site. The observer would then approach the next site, noting the visible relationships along the way.

On returning from fieldwork the GIS database was updated where required and new maps produced to demonstrate visual relationships. The maps utilise OS height data from the Profile (1:10 000) and Terrain (1:50 000) datasets and were sourced from the Edina Digimap service.

In the case of the smaller groupings the approach used was relatively straightforward. The larger groupings, such as Long Mynd, were more challenging and required repeated fieldwork over the course of a number of visits, but the familiarity with the sites and the landscape gained from these visits was crucial to working with the more dispersed sites encountered.

Whenever issues of visibility are considered, the question of vegetation cover has to be addressed but of concern is the paucity of contemporary excavated sites within the study area. The palaeoenvironmental record for the Bronze Age in Wales is largely comprised of pollen evidence and suggests an increase in clearance activity and a predominantly pastoral economy, but with some evidence for cereal cultivation (Caseldine 1990; 2003, 73-4). A similar picture is emerging from the English side of the border (Twigger & Haslam, 1991, 747-8; Greig, 2007, 46). Although the above is a broad generalisation, where environmental evidence is available it appears that round barrows were built in previously cleared areas. The buried soil at Site 1, Four Crosses, indicated woodland clearance and intensive animal grazing prior to the construction of the barrow (Wimble 1986) whilst pollen analysis on samples obtained from Shooting Box barrow suggest the Long Mynd was mainly covered by grassland (Dinn *et al* 2004, 71-5). Whilst these sites give an impression of the immediate area of a single site it is more problematic to estimate the extent of the clearance. A detailed study from Exmoor (Fyfe 2012, 2768) suggested that the round barrow groups were constructed in the most open part of the local landscape but significant strands of woodland were preserved. Analysis of the buried land surfaces beneath the barrows at Brenig indicated a vegetation cover similar to that of today, one of moorland and abundant heather (Lynch 1993, 157).

Based upon the available evidence it is likely that the contemporary landscape was one of gradual deforestation with clearances of greater or lesser extents creating a mosaic of vegetation cover, but to what extent this was accelerated by the construction of monuments is not entirely clear. It must be assumed that vegetation will have had some effect on certain vistas, but this may have been mitigated by seasonal changes (Cummings & Whittle 2003).

4.4 Cluster A: Moel Ty-uchaf, Clwyd

The Moel Ty-uchaf cluster, represented by seven entries on the database, was selected for study as it consists of a variety of monument forms and is located within a landscape particularly rich in Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments (Fig 53). The proximity of the cluster to other barrow groups opens up the possibility of investigating a wider landscape in order to understand the distribution of such groupings, their topographic and social relationships and questions relating to landscape use.

The significance of this section of the Dee Valley and its accompanying uplands can be attested by the monuments and artefacts found here, and the links that can be inferred with places further afield. Three chambered tombs, Branau Uchaf, Craig yr Arian and Tan y Coed (Bowen and Gresham 1967, 29-31), the latter considered by Lynch (2002) to be most likely of Cotswold-Severn type, are to be found within a 5km stretch of the valley. Lithic artefacts of note include a polished stone axe (Bowen and Gresham 1967, 27) and the elaborately carved flint mace-head found on the Maesmor estate, near Corwen, which has parallels from the far north-east of Scotland and the example found at the eastern tomb of the passage grave at Knowth, Ireland (Britnell 1991, 57-9; Burrow 2003, 97). The recovery of a copper flat axe of the Lough Ravel type from Merioneth (Bowen and Gresham 1967, 46-7) suggests an early adoption of metal and links with Ireland, but a copper flat axe found at Llandderfel in the Dee Valley appears to be of a metal derived from a more local source in the Welsh Borderlands (Bowen and Gresham 1967, 46-7; Northover 1980, 232; Savory 1980, 99-100).

In common with many sites in the borderlands, disturbance of the monuments is evident but there are no records of these investigations. The depression in the centre of the Moel Ty-uchaf kerb circle is known to date from at least the 18th century, as it was noted by the antiquary Thomas Pennant (Bowen and Gresham 1967, 81). The nature of modern archaeological investigation of prehistoric sites in the Berwyn uplands has largely been restricted to field and aerial survey, concerned with the examination, identification and classification of both old and new sites (Lynch 2002; Silvester 2003). The identification of cists during one such exercise has resulted in a detailed ground survey of all of the monuments at Moel Ty-uchaf (Jones 1999).

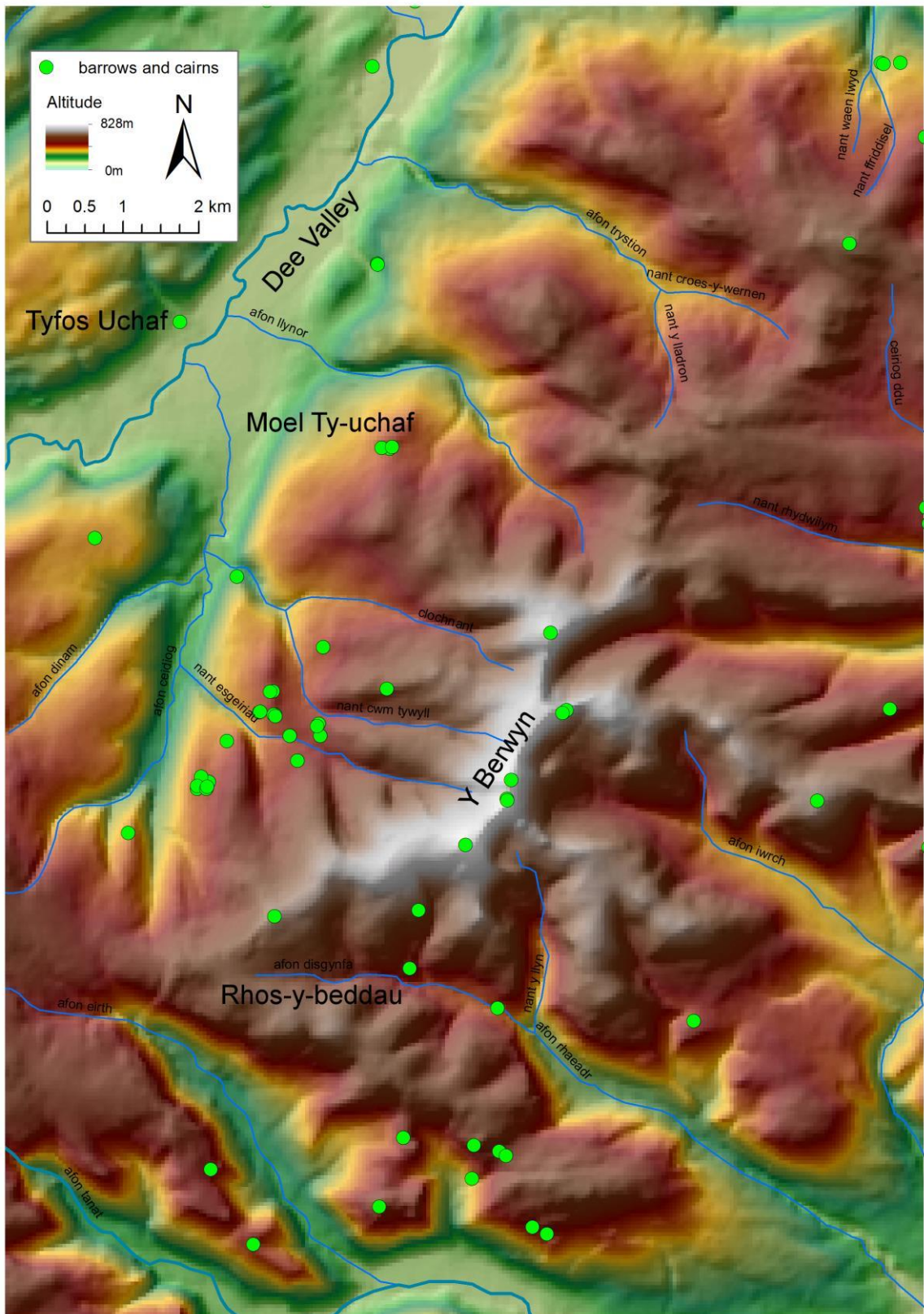


Figure 53: Location of the Moel-ty-uchaf cluster

4.4.1 Topography

The Moel Ty-uchaf cluster is located on a prominent spur that descends north-west from Y Berwyn, a high mountain ridge in north-east Wales (Fig 56). The western flanks of the massif descend gently in a series of spurs, before steepening as they reach the wide valley floor occupied by the River Dee (Afon Dyfrdwy). To the east the landscape rises to reach the Berwyn ridge, which includes some of the highest mountain peaks in Wales. The cluster is focused on and around a local summit (440m OD) which has a rather distinctive flattened appearance. To the north, the hillside descends steeply to the Afon Llynor, a tributary of the Dee, whilst directly to the south and below the summit is a minor col that separates streams descending north-west and north-east respectively. The site lies within an area of rough grassland and bracken whilst the underlying deposits are glacial boulder clays overlying bands of tuff, siltstones and mudstones (BGS 2012).

As would be expected from a hillside location, the views are expansive in one direction and restricted in the other. To the west the views are open, foregrounded by the Dee valley and rolling uplands and extending to the Cambrian Mountains beyond, whilst in an arc from the north-east to the south-west, the view is dominated by the Berwyn massif.

4.4.2 Description of the Grouping

The cluster, as recorded on the HER, comprises seven sites consisting of a stone circle located on the local summit, two cairns and four cists, all of which lie south, and below, the circle (Table 8). Whilst the complex has long been recognised, it was only during a recent survey that two of the cists (PRN 25253, 25262) were discovered (Jones 1999). Three of the cists are regularly spaced, c76m apart on a North West-South East axis that cuts across the contours of the spur.

Table 8: Moel-ty-uchaf cluster data

PRN	Name	Diameter	Nearest neighbour (m)
100847	Moel Ty-uchaf Circle	12	72
100848	Moel ty-uchaf Round Cairn	16	36
101322	Moel Ty-uchaf cairn	5	20
101323	Moel Ty-uchaf Cist I	4	20
101410	Moel Ty-uchaf Cist II	4	28
25253	Moel Ty-uchaf Cist III	4	76
25262	Moel Ty-uchaf Cist IV	5	76

PRN 100847

The stone circle (Fig 54) is sited west-south-west of the highest point of a broad local summit. It consists of 41 stones, ranging in height from c.0.2m to 0.85m, with some alternation between the larger and smaller stones, and these are placed in such a manner to form a near continuous kerb, leading to its alternate designation as a kerb circle. Bowen & Gresham (1967, 81) considered the gap to the southeast to be an original feature, and that to the east to be due to the removal of three stones, but without excavation these observations remain speculative. Within the centre of the circle a circular mound, 5m in diameter and 0.3m in height, has been disturbed and a flat stone, possibly the remains of a cist, was evident at the time of the Bowen and Gresham survey (1967, figure 37, 81).



Figure 54: View west over the Moel-ty-uchaf circle

PRN 100848

This cairn, erroneously described as a kerb cairn, might be better termed a *kerbed* cairn (see Lynch 1972; 1979 for a full account of variant circle characteristics), and appears to be defined by two partial circuits of differing arcs enclosing an area of raised ground. The recent survey describes the northern section as a kerb of single stones and the southern section as a ring bank, producing a flattened circle in plan. The stones of the northern section are mainly of quartz and there is much evidence of quartz in the ring bank to the south. Whilst somewhat confusing (there has been much disturbance at this site), in all likelihood the differing arcs may be explained by some modification to the monument in the past and may provide evidence of phasing. A more recent episode of disturbance, noted during the current fieldwork, clearly shows that the raised interior is comprised of small stones and may represent an infilling of a previous phase. There is no evidence for a cist and this would suggest a different purpose or tradition to that of the small mounds of the group, which it could be reasonably argued represent the remains of burials.

PRN101322

A low, slight mound, approximately 5m in diameter and barely visible beneath the vegetation, is situated c.25m to the south-west of PRN100848. A depression in the centre attests to disturbance but no internal structural evidence is apparent. The similarity in mound size to that observed at the sites described below suggests that this mound may cover a cist.

PRN101323

This site appears to be a small mound or cairn, the interior of which has been removed to expose a cist constructed on the ground surface. The cist, oriented to the ESE, is defined by edge set stones to the west and north with an internal measurement of 1.5m by 1.0m. Further stones, probably once edge-set, are visible to the north and may have once comprised a section of kerb.

PRN101410

This monument lies c.28m southwest of 101323 and is similar to the previous entry in that it appears to be a mound that has been robbed in the centre, revealing a cist. There are slight differences, including a possible greater internal space, estimated at 2.0m by 1.2m by Jones (1999, 82), and an orientation towards the south-east.

PRN25262

This site is a low oval mound, c.5m at its widest. Described as a cist on the HER, there is no obvious form to the stones that are visible, although the similarity in size and proximity of the mound to the other sites would suggest such an interpretation to be likely.

PRN25253

A relatively well preserved cist, oriented to the south-east with long edge-set slabs, although the south east end is less well defined (Fig 55). A quantity of smaller stones, perhaps indicative of collapse, litters the interior. The slight remains of a possible mound are evident on the western side of the cist.



Figure 55: Cist 25253

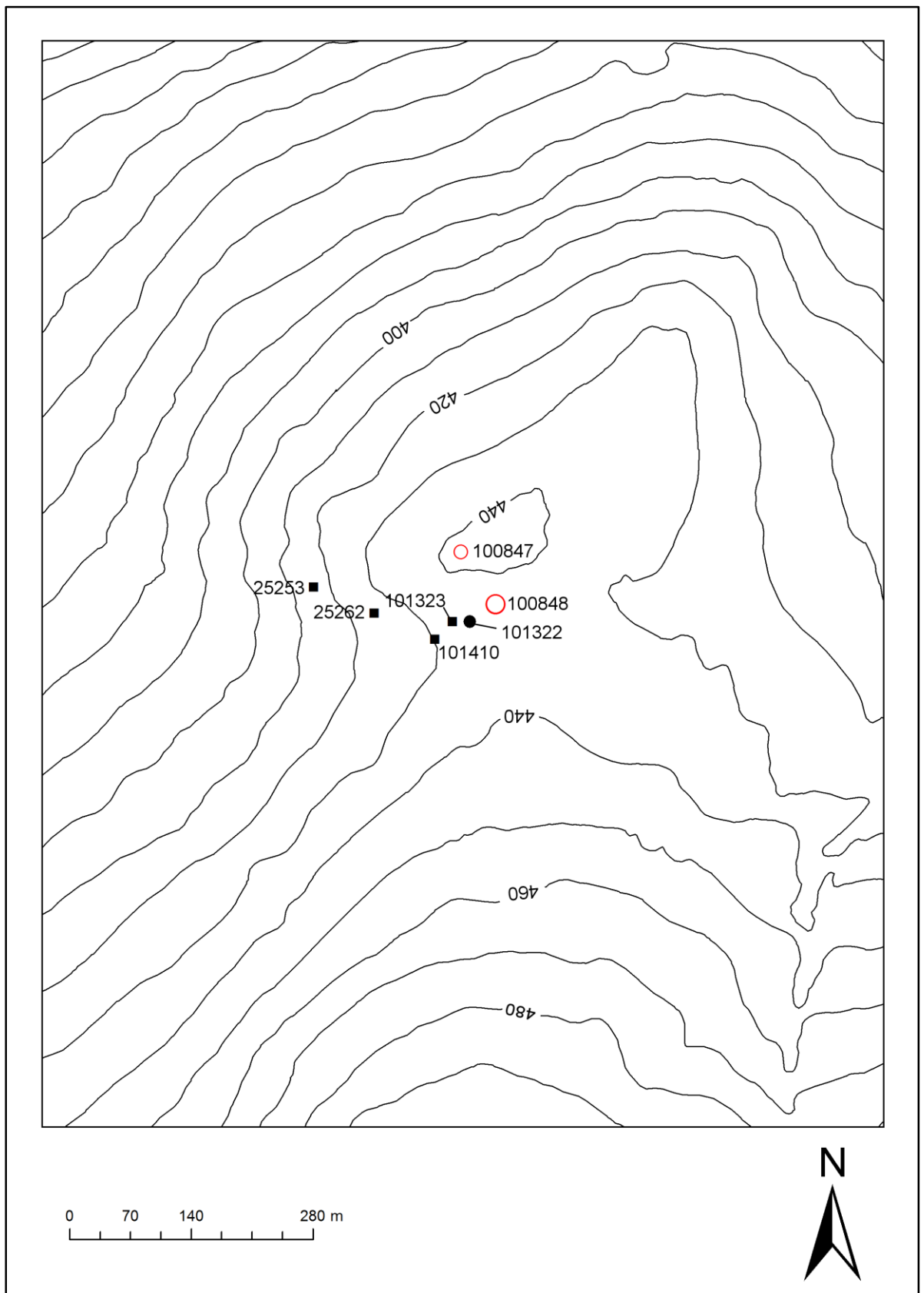


Figure 56: Location of sites at Moel-ty-uchaf

4.4.3 Cluster cohesion

The evidence for cohesion of the cluster is relatively straightforward, with all sites located no further than c.80m of at least one other site. The focus for the group would appear to be the kerb circle which commands a prominent position on the knoll, a distinct topographic locale. The circle is both topographically and visually distinct from the other elements of the grouping, although there is little doubt that it should be considered integral. The grouping then is nucleated, following conventional terminology, and there is evidence for a structured approach to the placement of at least some of the individual monuments. Three of the sites (25262, 25253, 101410) form a linear element, regularly spaced at intervals of c.76m (as measured from the centres of the sites). The exposed cists at the latter two sites are oriented on a south-east axis, whilst the plan of the former suggests that the putative cist will likely conform to this orientation. The orientation of the cists also corresponds to the axis upon which the mounds are aligned, that is to the south-east. The similarity in morphology, the spacing between the mounds, and the axis upon which both cists and mounds are oriented, suggest a local template which was known and adhered to by their builders. This may suggest that these monuments were constructed over a reasonably short time span. The remaining small cairn (101322) and cist (101323) appear to belong to the same constructional tradition but are distinct from the three other sites in that they are not on the same axis and are more closely spaced. The precise position of the mounds/cists directly overlooks a drove road, a route by which the heights of the Berwyn ridge can be obtained. This may have formed part of a routeway linking the valley floor to the circle and beyond.

4.4.4 Visual relationships

Although every monument within the grouping maintains intervisibility with at least one other monument, it does not appear to be the case that such concerns were paramount (Fig 57 and Table 9). Intervisibility from the stone circle to the other monuments within the grouping is limited, restricted to the three sites due south (101322, 101323, 101140). These sites were only visible from the circle once they had been identified on the ground due to vegetation cover although they may have been more apparent when first constructed. The sites below the summit are all low, visually unimpressive, and their topographic situation suggests that they were not built or sited to be viewed from afar. The cairn (100848) and the stone circle are not

intervisible and reciprocal views from this cairn are limited to two other sites (101322, 101410), but again these are not obvious due to high vegetation.

There are a number of broadly contemporary monuments situated on the western flanks of Y Berwyn but there is no visual relationship between these and the Moel Tyuchaf grouping. It would seem then that this grouping did not require visual reference to a wider monumental landscape.

Table 9: Intervisibility of cluster

PRN	Sites visible						
	100847	100848	101322	101323	101410	25253	25262
100847			x	x	x		
100848			x		x		
101322	x	x		x			
101323	x		x		x		
101410	x	x		x			x
25253							x
25262					x	x	

X=site is visible

4.4.5 Topographic relationships

In common with many other sites, the grouping is focused upon a topographically distinct locale. Although the circle is sited towards the south-western edge of the knoll, and thus away from the highest point, the circle's builders took advantage of the natural topography to achieve a dramatic visual effect, creating the impression that the circle is on the edge of the landscape when viewed from the interior. This phenomenon has also been noted at Mitchells Fold stone circle in Shropshire.

The remainder of the sites have a southerly aspect, situated just above a stream head. The views from the circle to the north-east in an arc to the south are dominated by the near ridges and skyline of the Berwyn range, but it is the expansive views in an arc from the south-west to the north that command attention. Here the impressive vista encompasses the near landscape of the Dee Valley, the uplands of Mynydd Mynyllod and the Cambrian mountains including distinctive peaks such as the Arenigs. The other sites share this westward view although it is not as panoramic, being constrained by the local summit.

The large cairn (100848) occupies a position which has many parallels within the borderlands. The cairn eschews the local high point for a location close to, but below

it. Although the location is perhaps not a col in the sense of marking a pass, nevertheless it is sited between higher topographic elements. As such, the views north and south are restricted by the near landscape. Similarly, to the east the views are restricted by a north trending spur of Moel Pearce. It is only to the west, to the Dee Valley and beyond, that the open vistas are available. The three monuments which make up the linear element to the grouping are sited further from the col and are perhaps subject to a different imperative.

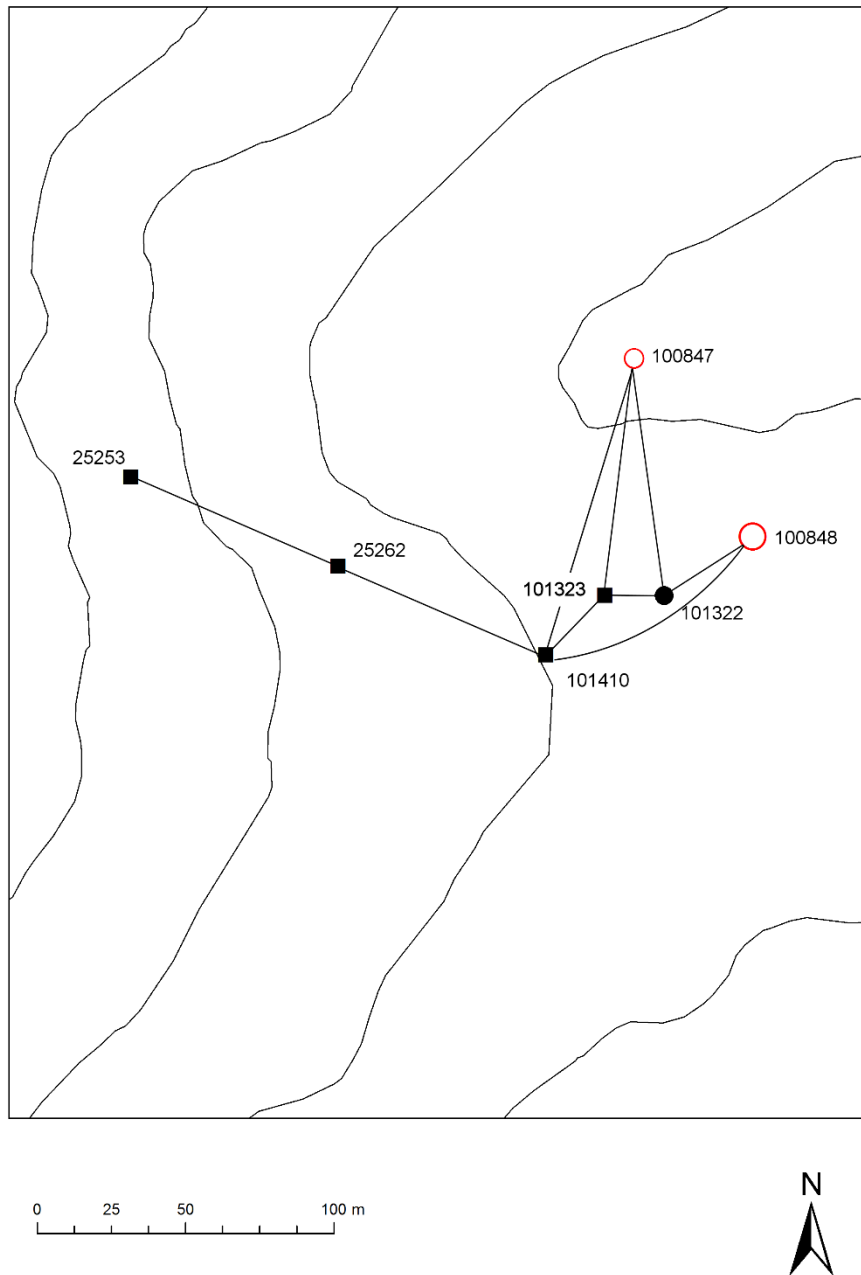


Figure 57: visibility at Moel Ty-uchaf

4.4.6 The cluster and its place within the landscape

The cluster then is a complex of different site types, most likely broadly contemporary and which served different functions and thus may be considered a grouping. The focus appears to be the stone circle, set apart and distinct from the other sites. Lynch (1973, 77) categorises Moel Ty-uchaf as a kerb-circle and has suggested that the presence of cists within the interior of many of these stone settings means they are more likely to be burial, rather than ceremonial monuments. This would certainly appear to be the case at Cefn Caer Euni I, a rare example of an excavated kerb-circle located seven kilometres west of Moel Ty-uchaf (Lynch 1986). Due to the paucity of excavated evidence of such structures, it is worth examining this monument in more detail. At 10m diameter it is smaller than Moel Ty-uchaf and was constructed over an occupation layer containing Beaker sherds and flint waste. The sequence of activity appears to be brief and relatively straightforward. The ground was prepared by laying a surface of clay, into the centre of which a ditch and two post holes were dug. The kerb stones were set upon, and coterminous with this clay layer. Evidence from the central features, including phosphate analysis, led the excavator to believe these were probably foundations for a wooden structure which may have held a crouched inhumation. Soon after construction, the structure was removed and the interior of the kerb was filled with shallow layers of stones forming a level platform but leaving the stones of the kerb protruding. It would appear that the monument was built primarily to facilitate burial, or some form of ceremony involving the dead. The presence of a central mound at the Moel ty-uchaf circle, with dimensions similar to the other mounds/cists within the grouping, seemingly conforms to Lynch's characterisation. However, to uncritically extrapolate this primarily funerary function, based upon a superficially similar morphology, may be too simplistic and another interpretation can be considered to account for the particular differences between sites.

At Temple Wood, Kilmartin, Bradley (1998, 135-9) describes a sequence whereby an 'open' or permeable monument, a stone circle, gradually becomes enclosed by infilling the gaps between orthostats, creating a kerb circle. Successive phases ensue, culminating with the construction of cists and covering cairn material. Such a sequence is a possibility at Moel Ty-uchaf and may account for the difference in morphology between this circle and Cefn Caer Euni I. Today, the larger uprights are generally interspersed by one or two smaller stones, but these uprights may represent an early phase of an open circle. Built originally to fulfil a communities

ceremonial needs, when no longer required it was, in effect, decommissioned. The circle was closed by the addition of stones and rendered unsuitable for further ceremonies by the construction of the central mound, most likely covering a burial, within the centre. It is generally assumed that burials are later features of stone circles but definitive dating evidence is rare; however, a recent excavation at Duddo Stone Circle, Northumberland has provided radiocarbon dates demonstrating a sequence which shows burial occurring over 200 years after the construction of the circle (Edwards *et al* 2011). For Bradley (1998, 146), what begins as a process of closure, the transformation of open arena monuments into inaccessible places, culminates in the burial of certain individuals, and is an attempt to not only appropriate the past, but also harness the special properties of such places. At Moel Ty-uchaf; the special qualities that led the builders of the circle to this place were enhanced and reinforced by the circles presence, it became a place imbued with memories of the ceremonies conducted there, yet a separation was deemed appropriate for later monuments. In this case the separation was maintained by utilising the topographic properties of the place; mounds were created in proximity to the circle and drew upon its significance but did not impinge upon it. The large cairn, with its flattened platform, may have acted as the arena in which ceremonies and rituals were performed before burial in the nearby mounds and cists. At some point the community, in response to unknown factors, no longer required these ceremonies and the morphology of the stone circle and perhaps the large cairn was altered to reflect this. Perhaps the closure of the site signified a community that no longer had access to the resources the circle represented. In any case its function changed.

There are a number of stone circles within the wider landscape and the role and relationship of the Moel Ty-uchaf grouping to these must be explored. Cerrig Bwlch y Fedw (CPAT 2012) is located on a col, next to a stream, about 1km south-south-east from Moel Ty-uchaf at a height of 525m OD. It is small, with a diameter of just 5m and probably originally consisted of eight stones, of which five remain upright. The Tyfos-Uchaf circle (Bowen and Gresham 1967, 78-9), comprising fifteen large, recumbent boulders lies atop a flattened earthen mound of c.28m diameter and is sited on the edge of the Dee Valley floodplain and demonstrates the ambiguity of such sites, variously described as a stone circle, a cairn circle or the denuded remains of a cairn or barrow. At the southern end of the Berwyn ridge, the intriguing complex of Rhos-y-beddau lies on a shelf of an upland valley. This grouping of sites consists of a stone circle, an avenue of stones and a cairn (Grimes 1963, 120-22; Burl 1993, 77-8; Burl

2000), with a further possible stone circle 400m to the north-west, whose low stones Burl (1995) considers 'loose and questionable'. This clustering of stone circles of dissimilar design is not unique; at Penmaenmawr, Gwynedd (Griffiths 1960) and Corndon, Powys (p170) there are a number of circles and cairns of diverse morphologies and attention has been drawn to the associations of such aggregations and desirable materials (Burl 2000, 95-102; Darvill *et al* 2003). Penmaenmawr is close to the source of Group VII implements at Graig Llwyd (Keiller *et al* 1941, 603), whilst the Corndon circles are clustered around Hyssington, the Group XII source (Shotton *et al* 1951). There are no known stone sources close to the Moel Ty-uchaf grouping and so other resources must be considered.

Whilst attempting to identify the source of the gold utilised in the construction of the Mold cape, Needham (2012, 227-8) has drawn attention to the Berwyn Hills as a source of alluvial gold. Modern geochemical surveys, including stream sediment analysis (Cooper *et al* 1984; Smith 1993) at the Afon Trystion and its tributary, Nant-y-lladron have produced small quantities of panned gold, but it is feasible that this low yield may be due to exhaustion of the resource (Needham 2012, 228). The highest concentration of gold was found to the east of the Moel Ty-uchaf cluster near the headwaters of the Nant-y-lladron, and is thus removed from, but in the vicinity of the circle. Again parallels can be drawn in that circles and their associated monuments are located close to, but not necessarily in view of, the source of the resource. Whilst it has been argued that monuments such as stone circles and henges were utilised for the exchange and distribution of items such as stone axes (Bradley and Edmonds 1993), it is as likely that these monuments were constructed to facilitate rites and ceremonies related to resource extraction. The number and diversity of circle types present at certain locations may represent multiple, contemporary claims to resources (cf. Barrett 1994, 144; Brück 1999, 69), or perhaps they illustrate chronological variations on a theme.

There are other cairn and variant circle groupings on the Berwyn range and it appears that the western slopes of Y Berwyn were utilised in a different manner to that of the east. There are three groupings on the western slopes and all appear to be of a different character. The grouping of Cefn Penagored (p143) is dispersed along a ridge and consists of a variety of monument types including a kerb cairn, possible ring cairns and 'standard' cairns. The morphology, if not the landscape positioning of the individual cairns that constitute the grouping of Yr Aran is similar in some ways to that

of Moel Ty-uchaf, consisting of six, or possibly seven, small cairns of between 5-11m in diameter and c.0.5m in height, all of which have been disturbed at their centres. They are tightly grouped on the west facing slope of a northerly projecting spur. There is a cist evident at one of the cairns (PRN101963) which shares the same NW-SE orientation as the Moel Ty-uchaf cists. The principle difference between Yr Aran and Moel Ty-uchaf is the lack of what might be termed a ceremonial monument; rather it would appear that the grouping is solely concerned with burial monuments.

Almost every site on these western flanks is located between the 420-460m contours. This lower limit can be partly explained by land use regimes; the unenclosed open grazing land begins at around the 400m contour, but explaining the upper limit is more problematic. The higher slopes are largely avoided until the peaks are reached, and here these summits are all topped by cairns. On the eastern slopes, cairns revert to the normal patterning seen in the borderlands, occurring either individually or in small groupings of twos and threes. However, that such groupings appear to be confined to the western flanks of Y Berwyn may have less to do with cultural affiliations and more to do with specialist activities, perhaps related to resource extraction as has been suggested here.

4.5 Cluster B: Cefn Penagored, Clwyd

The Cefn Penagored cluster, represented by fourteen entries on the database, was selected for study as it provided an opportunity to compare a grouping in close proximity to another. As the cluster is sited on the western flanks of Y Berwyn, the reader is directed to the fieldwork section of the Moel Ty-uchaf grouping for a more detailed introduction to the area and its background.

The Berwyns have been subject to intense survey as part of the Uplands Initiative, the earlier results of which have been summarised by Silvester (2003). The majority of the sites in this cluster appear to be recent discoveries (Silvester 1992). A large number of small clearance cairns have also been identified in the area and a standing stone is located on the northern slopes of the Cefn Penagored ridge. A possible later Bronze Age settlement has been identified on the lower slopes of the Pennant spur (Silvester 2003, 82-4; Silvester & Hankinson 2004) which is particularly rare for the borderlands. The settlement is centred on the foundations of a large circular house. Two smaller huts have also been identified and these lie amidst a series of stony banks defining areas which have been cleared of surface debris and so most likely represent fields.

4.5.1 Topography

The Cefn Penagored cluster (Figs 58-9) is located on the open moorland interfluvial spur of Pennant which descends westwards from Cadair Berwyn, at 827m OD the highest peak of the Berwyn mountains. The spur is narrowest along its upper reaches, averaging a width of about 500m and is well defined, bounded on either side by the streams Nant Esgeiriau and Nant Cwm Tywyll. Partway down, at about 450m OD, the spur levels somewhat and increases in width before arcing northwards and rising to create a distinctive ridge, Cefn Penagored. The higher slopes of the Berwyn massif rise in an arc from the south-west to the north-east and to the west the hillside descends steeply to the floor of the Cwm Pennant which runs northwards before opening out into the Dee Valley.

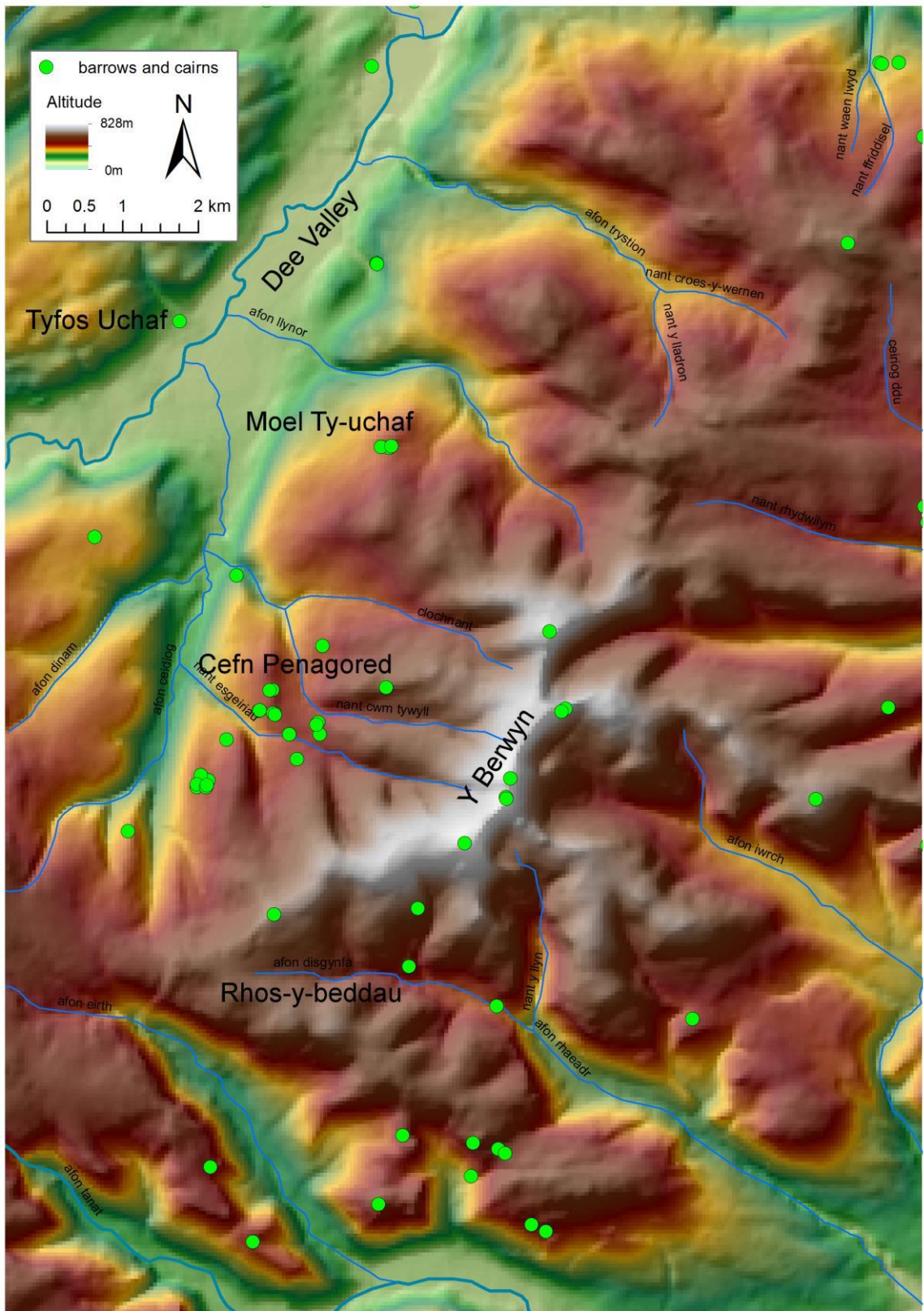


Figure 58: Location of the Cefn Penagord cluster



Figure 59: Cefn Penagored with the main Berwyn mountains clothed in cloud beyond

4.5.2 Description of the Cluster

The cluster as recorded on the HER comprises eleven sites of varying morphology that are distributed over a distance of 800m along the spur and ridge (Table 10; Fig 60). The names of the sites recorded on the HER are retained here although some contain descriptors which the author considers inaccurate. A revised categorisation is provided in the right hand column of the table below. The descriptions of the individual sites are detailed overleaf, commencing with the northernmost features.

Table 10: Cefn Penagord cluster data

PRN	Name	Diameter (m)	Nearest neighbour (m)	Description
19580	Cefn Penagored ridge cairn	7	16	Kerb cairn
19581	Cefn Penagored satellite cairn 1	4	16	Cairn
19582	Cefn Penagored satellite cairn 2	4	23	Cairn
101662	Pennant round cairn	6	36	Cairn
101925	Nant Cwm Tywyll ring cairn	20	36	Ring Cairn
105139	Cefn Penagored ring cairn I	13	41	Ring Cairn
105140	Cefn Penagored ring cairn II	8	41	Ring Cairn
105142	Cefn Penagored ring cairn	5	14	Kerb Cairn
105143	Cefn Penagored cairn	5	14	Cairn
101885	Pennant platform cairn	11	322	Not Found
101926	Foel Fawr cairn	18	136	Dubious

PRN 19580; 19581; 19582

These three cairns are located on a south facing slope of the southern edge of Cefn Penagored, at a point where the ridge rises from relatively flat terrain. The principal cairn of this element (19580) is defined by a ring of stones forming a kerb around two long slabs which are the probable remains of a cist. Its morphology allows it to be satisfactorily defined as a kerb cairn. The cist slabs are 1.1m long, set 0.7m apart and oriented towards the rising ridge to the north, approximately NNE. Two smaller, undistinguished, cairns are located 14m to the west (19581) and 20m to the south (19582). The visual horizon from this element of the cluster is restricted to the Berwyn ridge and its slopes except for a narrow, confined view to the west which encompasses the distinctive hill of Foel Cwm Sian-Llŵyd. Although the locations of the Pennant cairns to the east could be identified, the cairns themselves could not be easily distinguished.

PRN101662

This cairn is located on a level terrace on the north-west facing slope of the main Pennant spur. There is nothing distinctive to note in the construction of the cairn and no evidence for a cist was apparent in the central disturbance. From this location, Cefn Penagored arcs towards the northwest, clearly visible as a ridge line and forms a topographic boundary, serving to hinder the views to the west. The locations, but not the monuments, of two of the three ridge elements of the cluster are visible.

PRN101925

This impressive site, the largest and outwardly the most complex, is located 36m to the north-east of 101662 and is intervisible with this cairn. It comprises two concentric rings with low banks 2m wide which encircle a central feature with a diameter of 6m which is more difficult to interpret. It may be an inner ring or a cairn that has been dug into. The HER entry has a note which states that the outer ring may be modern but with no details to suggest why this may be so and no reason for this suggestion was apparent during the fieldwork. Although structurally impressive, the low height of the banks means that this monument is not immediately apparent from the immediate vicinity and may have only appeared dramatic if viewed from higher up the spur.

PRN 105139

This low and possibly denuded ring cairn is defined by a narrow turf covered bank with some stones protruding. It is sited on a saddle of the ridge crest of Cefn Penagored, at the foot of the southern summit. In its present condition it is barely visible until the observer is just upon it. The views to the west are long ranging with distant mountains and ridges observable, though the Dee Valley is not readily visible. The main Berwyn massif looms large when looking to the south and a distinct peak, Foel Cwm-Sian-Llŵyd is visible, as it is from most of the sites of the cluster. Although the cairn appears to be on the edge of the ridge and assumes a skylined position, its low height means it is not a prominent feature in the landscape today.

PRN 105140

Lying just below the ridge on a level terrace of the eastern slope of Cefn Penagored this appears to be similar in form to 105139 although slightly smaller. The views are restricted to the Berwyn massif and although visible from 105139, this visibility is not reciprocal.

PRN 105142

The morphology of this well-defined cairn on the western flank of Cefn Penagored is readily apparent. About 5m in diameter it is formed by a ring of large recumbent boulders up to 1.5m in length which suggests the monument is a kerb cairn rather than a ring cairn as described by the HER entry. A large quantity of smaller stones, including many substantial quartz pieces within the interior, may indicate a former cairn covering that has been robbed out. An edge set stone in the interior would suggest a possible cist, and although this appears to be set on an east-west

orientation, it could not be determined if this was the long or short axis. It is located with views over the Nant Esgeiriau and Nant y Waun which feed into Cwm Pennant.

PRN 105143

This site, located approximately 25m south-west of 105142 appears to be the remains of a robbed out cairn. Two edge set stones, set at a right angle within the centre of the cairn, are the probable remains of a cist. Although the long and short axis could not be determined, one slab is set at NWSE, whilst the other is SW-NE. In common with 105142 a large quantity of quartz was noted at this cairn.

Discounted Cairns

PRN101926

Although described as a large cairn damaged by later activity, a more recent survey has suggested that the feature is in fact a sheepfold that has had stone piled against its outer walls. Upon inspection, the author concurs and the feature is discounted here as a prehistoric cairn.

PRN101885

A probable mis-location of another site, this was not found during fieldwork or by previous surveys.

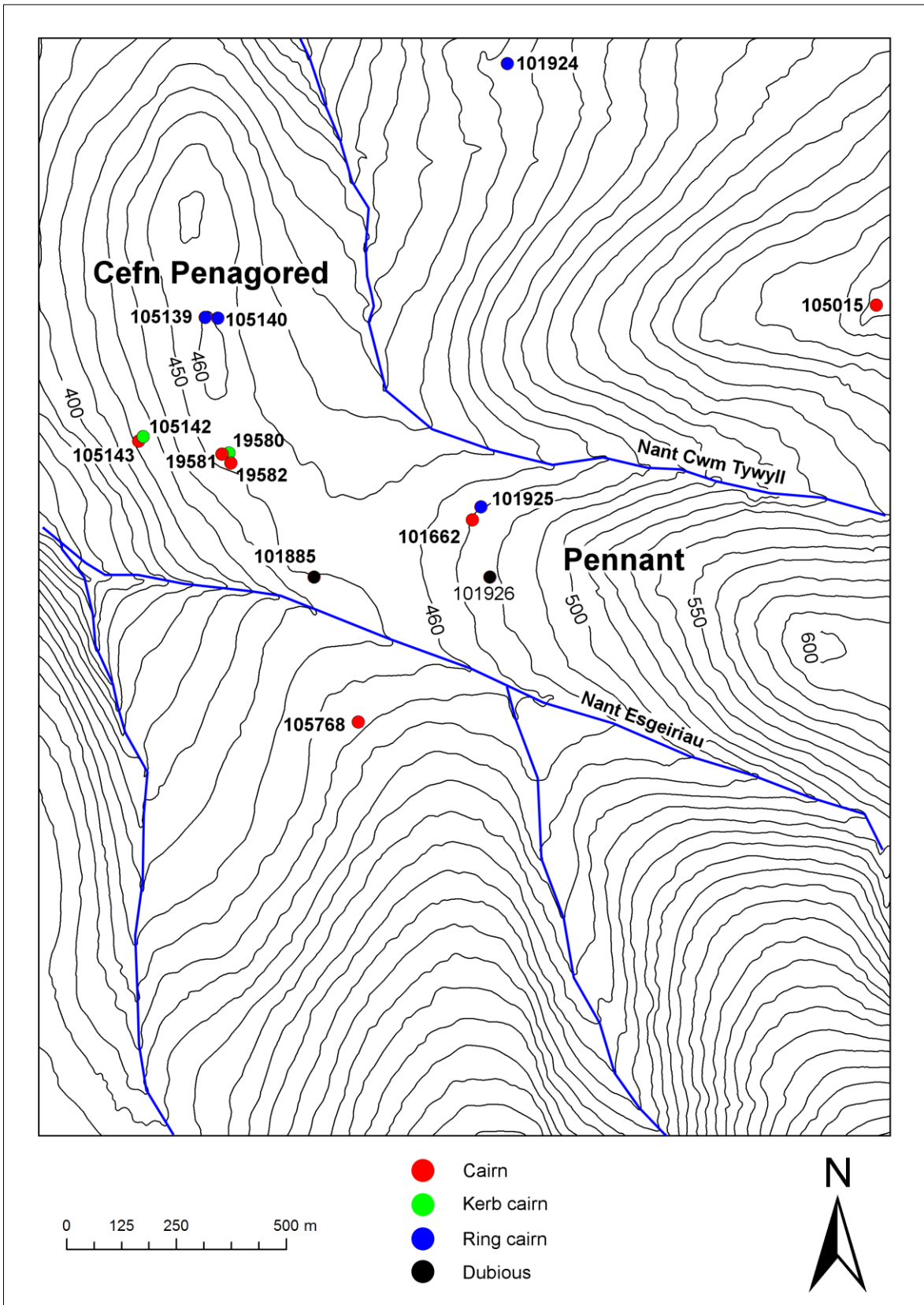


Figure 60: location of sites at Cefn Penagored

4.5.3 Cluster cohesion

The monuments at Cefn Penagored can be considered a grouping due to their topographic and spatial isolation from other groupings and monuments and their placement with reference to a distinct section of landscape, a spur bounded by steep, stream-fed gullies. The grouping consists of four nucleated elements of two or three monuments, dispersed along a spur and ridge for approximately one kilometre. These elements are separated by between c.200-500m; the latter figure is derived from the distance between the ridge and spur elements.

There is some doubt as to the veracity of the southernmost cairn (101926) and it could be argued that this makes sense if the tightly clustered nature of the other nucleated elements is considered. The outlier (105768) is not considered to be a part of the grouping and this may be explained not only by its topographic separation but also by its form. Although the exact morphology is difficult to discern due to later plundering, it would have been a substantial and visually impressive cairn originally. This is in marked contrast to the other cairns within the group, all of which are either much smaller in diameter, low in height, or both.

In contrast to Moel Ty-uchaf, there does not appear to be an overriding monumental focus for the grouping, rather it appears that the distinctive qualities of the landscape itself provided the impetus for monument construction.

4.5.4 Visual relationships

Visual relationships do not appear to have been a primary concern for the structure of this grouping (Table 11, Fig 61). Whilst monuments *within* the individual nucleated elements are mostly intervisible, (the exception being the ring cairns atop Cefn Penagored, whereby 105139 could not be seen from 105140) this intervisibility was not apparent *between* the nucleated elements during the fieldwork. This is in part due to obscuration by modern vegetation. In addition, the landscape is littered with surface stone and small rocky outcrops making it difficult to distinguish the monuments from a distance due to their low, unobtrusive design. Although Lynch (1998, 62) has described how the use of unweathered rock during the reconstruction of a platform cairn at Brenig transformed its visual prominence, this effect would have

been short-lived unless these areas were grazed, or otherwise tended. However, the nucleated elements are close enough that the *locations*, if not the monuments, are visible and would have been recognised by a knowledgeable population.

Table 11: intervisibility of cluster

PRN	Sites visible									
	1958 0	1958 1	1958 2	10166 2	10192 5	10192 6	10513 9	10514 0	10514 2	10514 3
19580		x	x	x						
19581	x		x	x						
19582	x	x		x						
101662					x	x				
101925				x		x				
101926				x	x					
105139								x		
105140										
105142										x
105143									x	

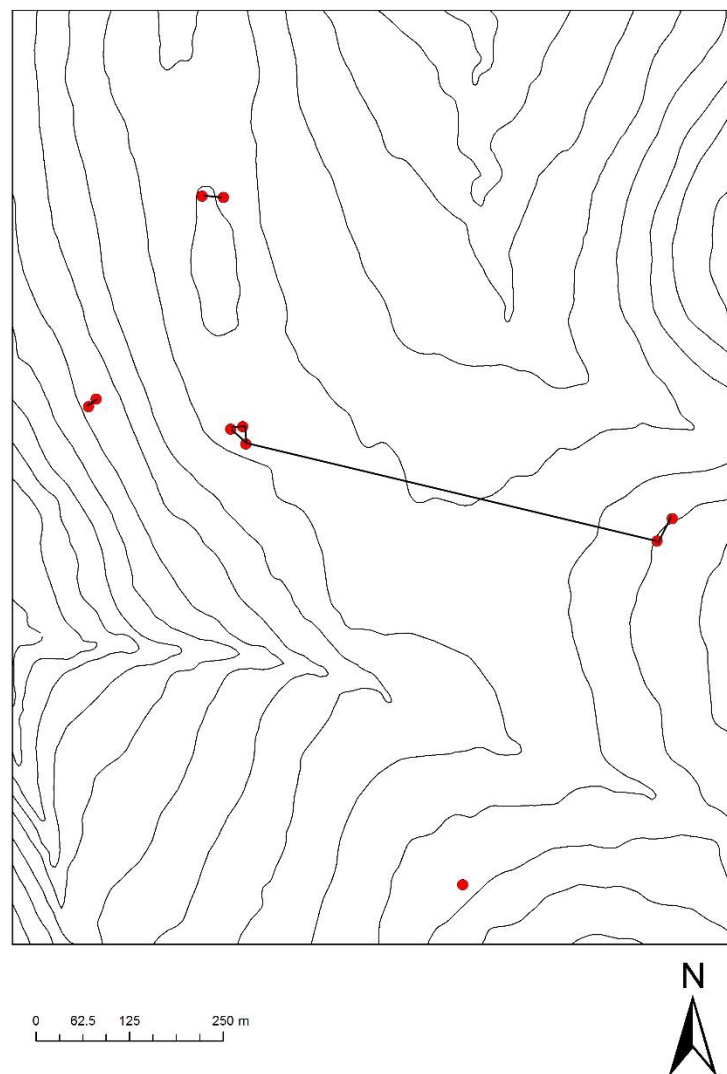


Figure 61: visibility at Cefn Penagored

4.5.5 Topographic relationships

The notable feature of this grouping appears to be the restriction of sites within the boundaries of the distinctive deep gullies of Nant Cwm Tywyll and Nant Esgeiriau. These serve to demarcate and delimit the focus of much of the activity on this part of the hillside. It is perhaps no accident that this spur was utilised in favour over other, nearby spurs and that is because of the distinctive ridge that rises to the north, on which three nucleated elements can be found. Of interest also is the avoidance of the flat ground that separates Cefn Penagored and the Pennant spur. The monuments at the edges of this flat ground are sited where the land begins to rise.

The form of the spur, and the siting of most of the monuments upon it, focuses attention on the immediate landscape. This is not a grouping that is visually concerned with the wider world. Although some longer views outwards to the west are available, these seem incidental, unavoidable; rather it is to the interior and the intimate, a world almost enclosed by the local topography that was important. This focus on the immediate landscape is also suggested by the unobtrusive nature of the monuments. These are all low structures that blend in with a rocky landscape rather than standing apart from it, a characteristic noted elsewhere (Lewis 2007, 81).

There appear to be two possible imperatives at work in this area but it is difficult to distinguish a primary factor. These demonstrate appropriation, or the positive selection of certain landscape attributes, and rejection, or avoidance, of others. On the spur it is readily apparent that the Cefn Penagored ridge was of special interest, yet the highest points were avoided; a ring cairn (105139) is located on a saddle with rising ground to the north and south, and another (105140), on a terrace on the eastern slope below. This phenomenon with regard to ring cairns has also been noted in South Wales (Ward 1988b, 159) where they are frequently sited in the lee of, or overlooked from, higher ground, and that a slope or terrace below a ridge crest is a typical position. Such topographic preference, however, is not universal within the borderlands as the ring cairn atop Cefn Caer Euni (Lynch 1986), a few kilometres to the west, and the ring cairns on Titterstone Clee Hill, Shropshire to the east demonstrate.

4.5.6 The grouping and its place within the landscape

Immediately apparent is that within the grouping there are discrete elements. These are comprised of pairs, and in one case three monuments of dissimilar types, the exception being the ring cairns on the ridge. The presence of different monument types may be explained by a number of factors. These include, but are not restricted to, functional variability, chronological factors and social constraints. The first two factors are perhaps easier to identify. In the first instance a distinction may be drawn between ring cairns, which are considered primarily ceremonial monuments (Lynch 1979), and the more common mounded cairns, typically identified as burial monuments. Secondly, radiocarbon determinations from elsewhere suggest that ring cairns appear earlier in the monumental sequence (Lynch 1984; 1993, 117-43; Ward 1988b) whilst kerb cairns are much later developments (Lynch 1993, 96-101).

Without excavation data it is impossible to be certain how the grouping developed, but it is suggested here that the focus of the grouping may initially have been the element to the south-east. To demonstrate why this might be so, it is necessary to first consider the ring cairn (101925). This appears to be modified by the addition of a cairn at its centre, a feature noted at other sites including Gray Hill, Monmouthshire (Chadwick 2010, 99-101). It could be argued that such developments signal a change in use; Roberts (2007, 106) for example has argued that changes in the form and activities at monuments may have served to sustain tenurial relationships and occupational practices related to pasturing, but there is reason to suspect an alternative explanation. At Cefn Bryn on the Gower in south Wales, there are two ring cairns separated by about 20m, one of which had its open centre in-filled (Ward 1988b). The excavator considered this act represented the cessation of use rather than continuity of activity in a different form. Unfortunately it is not possible to determine whether the one ring was closed before the other was built. At Titterstone Clee Hill in Shropshire, one ring cairn was sealed in a comparable manner to that at Cefn Bryn, another had a cairn constructed at its centre, whilst a third remained open.

Modifications of a slightly different nature have also been noted in other 'open arena' monuments. The possible use of burial at Moel Ty-uchaf has already been discussed and at Dyffryn Lane, Powys, a stone circle was completely concealed beneath a mound (Gibson 2010, 232). It is possible to view these actions as processes of decommissioning. Rather than simply abstaining from using these sites, there is a

concerted effort to ensure ceremonies or rituals would no longer be performed inside them. Rituals and ceremonies often require outcomes (Bell 1997) and if such outcomes were not achieved it is conceivable that a reason for this may be found with the monument itself, or perhaps its location. A new monument is thus required but the local template and conventions regarding siting are observed. The decommissioning of the old site serves to discourage illicit use which may bring further bad fortune.

Returning to Cefn Penagored, it is feasible then to suggest that the eastern ring cairn was no longer required and the focus of ceremonial activity switched to the ridge. Whilst this hypothesis is plausible, it does not explain why both of the ring cairns on the ridge remained open. It may be that these outwardly similar monuments were utilised contemporaneously, perhaps representing social differentiation within a community. If the ring cairns were not decommissioned this may indicate the rituals were more successful in their outcomes. This would imbue the ridge with a new potency, strengthen the significance of place, and serve to attract the building of further monuments. That this may have happened over some considerable time may be suggested by the types of monuments constructed if the chronological framework suggested above is accepted. This is not to suggest that the conceptual understanding of this place remained static over what may have been hundreds of years (cf. Garwood 2007), rather that the earlier monuments inscribed and made material a significance that was acknowledged by later generations.

This leaves the problem raised earlier regarding a preference for the transition from higher ground to lower, or flatter areas and the avoidance of local eminences. There are two ways of approaching this problem which are not necessarily exclusive. The first assumes a certain pragmatism in that having monuments, particularly ring cairns, overlooked by higher ground allows the ceremonies performed within to be observed more readily (Ward 1988a, 104; 1988b, 169). A rather different approach considers the conceptual notion that landscapes may act to situate the cosmos on earth (Ashmore 2008). Tacon (2010) has highlighted transitional topographic features as places where concepts of an upper world, a lower world and the earth come together, where the axis mundi is located. The placing of monuments at these points in the landscape may be indicative metaphorically of the rituals performed therein, perhaps those concerned with stages of transition such as the passage from life to death (Tilley 2004, 196). Bradley (2000, 107) has argued that monumental architecture can invest significant natural places with additional layers of symbolism.

This implies a reciprocal relationship between landscape and monument that goes beyond simple appropriation of a significant place. If this is the case then it is reasonable to suppose that the obverse of Bradley's observation may also be true, and that elements of topography can add to the significance of the monument.

Whilst some aspects of the grouping are difficult to decode, what is without doubt is that of a desire for proximity. This occurred on two spatial scales; the desire to place monuments within a defined topographic entity, in this case the bounded landscape of the spur and ridge, and also the proximity of one cairn to another. Whilst it is possible that the impetus to site one monument next to another was different on every occasion, there does appear to be a concern with paired barrows and cairns within the wider study area.

The wider landscape of the Berwyns has already been discussed in some detail in the section on the Moel Ty-uchaf grouping. Here it is sufficient to explore the immediate environs. The presence of a small number of outliers of diverse forms are associated with the grouping by relative proximity. Their isolation, both from the main grouping and from other monuments is worth considering. A reasonably well preserved, small ring cairn (101924) at Fridd Camen has both architectural and topographic similarities to the Cefn Penagored cairns. Situated on a slight col between a rising spur to the east and a significant rock outcrop to the west, it consists of a low encircling bank with some evidence for an inner kerb and a cist. Another cist, this time only partly exposed beneath a substantial capstone, lies at the centre of a large stone mound to the south of the spur (105768). Although heavily plundered to provide material for adjacent enclosures, it is evident that this was once a substantial, conspicuous cairn, atypical for this landscape. By contrast the final feature is a small, undistinguished cairn (105015) located near an outcrop high on the Carnedd y Ci spur. The visibility of the ridge is the one feature that connects these cairns and the Cefn Penagored grouping, but in a wider landscape of grouped monuments these cairns are conspicuous exceptions that may indicate some form of social exclusion was practiced. The summit cairns of Y Berwyn and the groupings at Yr Aran and Moel Ty-uchaf are located nearby, but there is no visual relationship between these and Cefn Penagored. The groupings all exhibit different characteristics, both in their composition and their topographic situations, and as such it is likely that such aggregations can be attributed to different communities, perhaps drawn to this place by the discovery of desired materials such as gold.

4.6 Cluster C: Corndon Hill, Powys

This cluster, located on the high eminences of Corndon Hill, Powys (Fig 63), was selected for study as it is situated within a landscape particularly rich in broadly contemporaneous activity and monuments, but the possible relationships between the cairns and the nearby stone circles of Mitchell's Fold and the Hoarstones, and the source of Group XII stone at Hyssington has not been previously explored.

Although Corndon Hill is topographically related to the Shropshire Hills, administratively it is located within the old county of Montgomeryshire, now part of Powys, with the hill demarking the national boundary. This may in part explain the lack of synthetic consideration of this important area; the stone circles are on the English side of the border and the Group XII source in Wales.

All of the Corndon cairns display evidence of disturbance but there are no recorded excavations and previous archaeological work has been confined to cataloguing, most recently as part of the RRF survey (Gibson 2002). Two nearby sites have been excavated recently due to damage; a barrow on the col separating Corndon from Lan Fawr (Britnell *et al* 2008) and a small cairn on the eastern slopes of Lan Fawr (Britnell 1988).

4.6.1 Topography

In a landscape of long, narrow uplands, Corndon Hill stands apart from its surroundings, a steep sided solitary massif rising to 513m OD. It is a distinctive landmark in this part of the borderland; from the north and south it appears conical (Fig 62), yet from the east it appears rather more elongated. In plan view the hill certainly appears roughly circular and is bisected by a dry valley that extends west-south-west. This has resulted in the formation of an encircling ridge upon which a number of eminences are to be found. The main summit lies to the north whilst the subsidiary high points decrease in altitude as the ridge curves around in a clockwise direction. To the west Corndon is separated from the lower hill of Lan Fawr by a north-south trending pass that links Stapeley Hill and the stone circles with the low hill at Hyssington, the Group XII source.

Corndon dominates the surrounding landscape and provides extensive panoramas that encompass the tor-topped quartzite ridge of Stiperstones and the Long Mynd plateau to the east; the uplands of the Clun Forest, Kerry Hills and the ridgeway to the south; the appropriately named Long Mountain to the north-west and the Shropshire lowlands to the north-east. The West Onny, a tributary of the River Teme, rises below the northern flank of Corndon and follows the eastern slopes to its confluence with the Teme at Bromfield, Shropshire, the site of a large round barrow cluster.

The bulk of Corndon Hill, particularly the upper elevations, is comprised of a dolerite phacolith, a lens-shaped mass that intrudes through rock of the Hope Shale Formation which form the lower slopes (Earp and Hains 1971, 42-5). On the south-western slopes these shales were extensively quarried to provide material for roofing and flooring (Moran 2003). The eastern slopes have some blockfields - areas of scree and larger rocks - and doleritic outcrops are exposed along the ridges. The present land-use on the hill consists of rough grazing and a recently felled forestry plantation that extends from the summit westwards to the col with Lan Fawr.



Figure 62: Corndon Hill viewed from the north

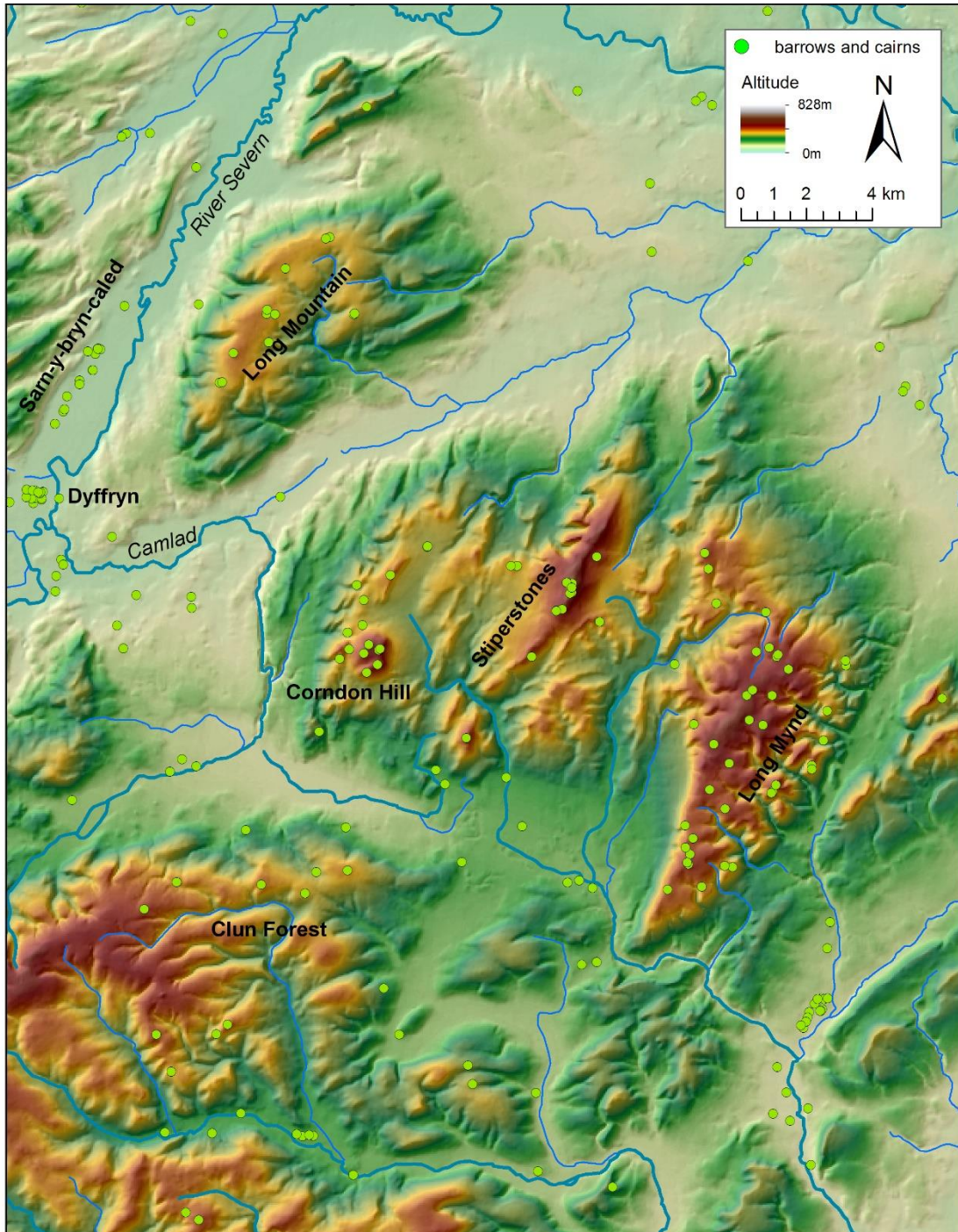


Figure 63: location of the Corndon Hill cluster

4.6.2 Description of the Cluster

The cluster as recorded on the HER comprises six cairns of outwardly similar morphology that are sited on the summit and subsidiary tops of the hill, the exception being Barrow I which is located on a shoulder south-west of the main summit (Fig 64

Table 12). In addition there is a possibility that Barrow I attracted smaller satellite cairns. When viewed from high points to the east such as Long Mynd and Stiperstones, some of the cairns are visible and this would have been more pronounced before they attained their now denuded state.

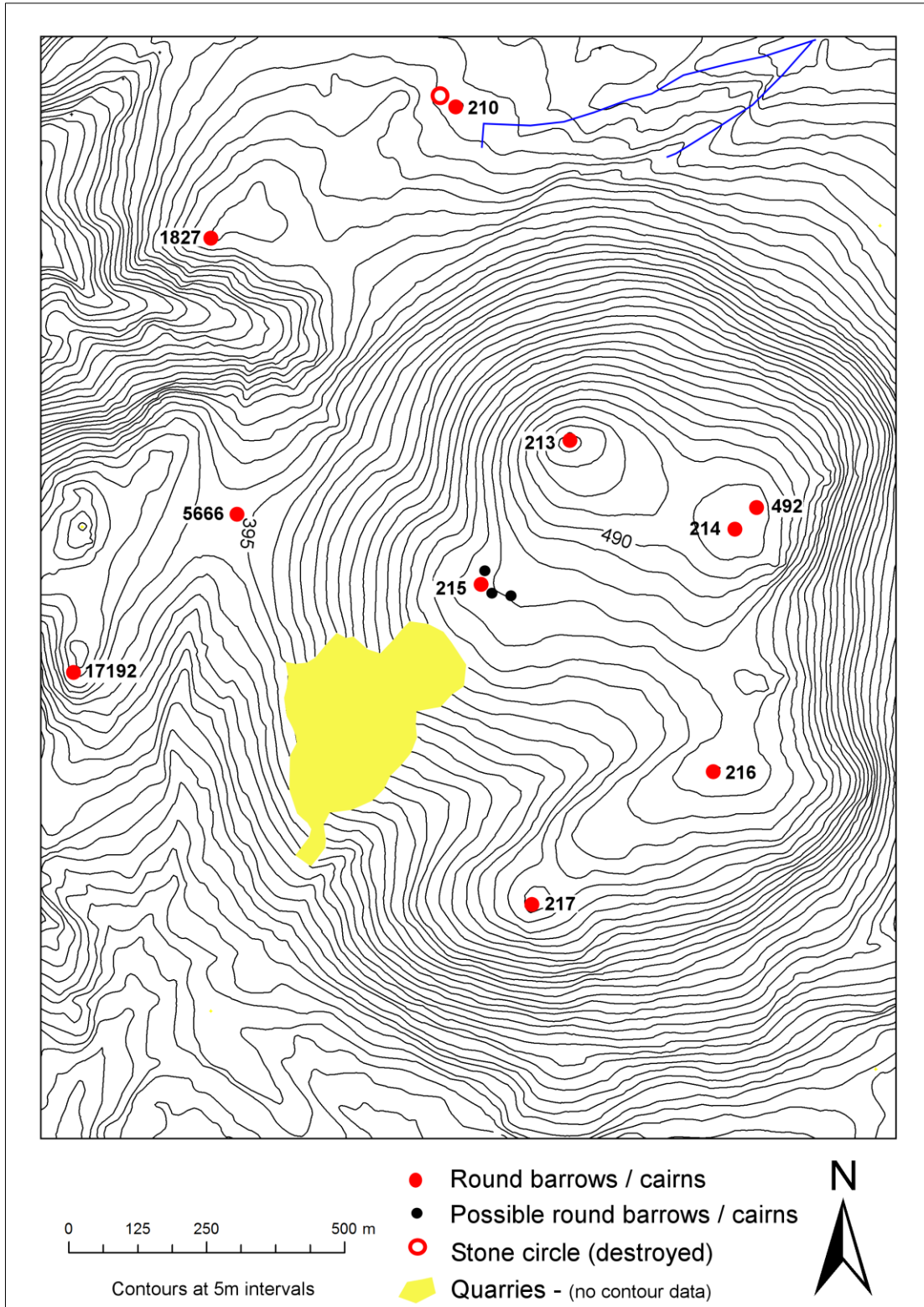


Figure 64: location of sites at Corndon Hill

Table 12: Corndon Hill cluster data

PRN	Name	Diameter (m)	Nearest neighbour (m)	Description
215	Corndon Hill Barrow I	22	314	Cairn
213	Corndon Hill Barrow II	30	314	Cairn
214	Corndon Hill Barrow III	23	57	Cairn
492	Corndon Hill Barrow IV	10	57	Cairn
216	Corndon Hill Barrow V	22	408	Cairn
217	Corndon Hill Barrow VI	20	408	Cairn

PRN 215 Barrow I

This denuded, partly robbed cairn is located on a level platform of the spur leading south-west from the main summit. It survives to a low height, partly covered by turf with a higher central area - the result of more recent manipulation. There is no observable formal structure to the cairn although a small semi-circular feature of dimensions 6.0m by 3.0m has been described as an appendage on the south-west quadrant. Some of the stone may have been used in the construction of an enclosure approximately 20m to the south-east. All of the cairns with the exception of Barrow IV (PRN 492) are skylined from this location. The bulk of the hill dominates the northern and eastern aspects, whilst to the south-east the spur provides a foreground to more distant horizons. To the west and northwest the land drops away giving the impression the cairn is isolated on the edge of the landscape. The summit of Lan Fawr is visible to the west and the only other longer ranging view that is not dominated by the near topography is to the south-west.

Possible satellite cairns to Barrow I

Two possible cairns adjacent to Barrow I have been noted by CPAT. A sub-circular feature 7m ESE of Barrow I (PRN 81296) has been interpreted as a possible ring cairn with a diameter of 6.0m, a bank 1.5m wide and 0.2m in height. This interpretation is not entirely convincing. It is most likely the 'appendage' noted above but may also be a natural feature, indeed the surrounding landscape is littered with small grassy hummocks which cover stones. A more likely cairn (PRN 81297) has been noted 10m to the north of Barrow I adjoining the bank of a relict field boundary. This feature is flat-topped in profile rising to 0.3m in height and holds a diameter of 5.5m. During the course of fieldwork a previously unrecognised cairn was noted 33m to the ESE of Barrow I (NGR SO30478 96649). This small cairn is largely turf covered

with numerous protruding small stones, a domed profile and is approximately 0.5m in height with a diameter of 3m.

PRN 213 Barrow II

This ill-defined cairn on the summit of Corndon has been extensively robbed and its extent is difficult to trace as the foundations lie beneath a covering of turf. In addition, the forestry plantation extended to just short of the western slope of the summit and partly overlay the cairn. Previous fieldworkers have estimated its diameter at 30m but this is difficult to confirm. A modern walker's cairn has been constructed on the base of the original structure and an OS triangulation pillar is sited in the north-west quadrant. As would be expected, the views are panoramic and long ranging, stretching as far as the Snowdonian peaks to the north-west. The locations, if not always the actual sites of monuments to the north are all visible, including the locations of the extant and destroyed stone circles.

PRN 214 Barrow III

This large cairn is sited on a broad subsidiary rise to the south-east of the main summit (Fig 65). It appears to have survived to a reasonable height, although the 1.8m as recorded on the HER appears to take account of remodelling to construct a shelter in the interior. The removal of stone to form the hollow appears to extend to the base of the cairn but no cists are apparent. Two further, shallow hollows are apparent in the northern and western quadrants. The setting is dramatic with the immediate landscape falling away in all directions except for the summit. The other cairns are all visible and skylined from this location.

PRN 492 Barrow IV

This cairn exhibits both morphological and topographic differences to the other cairns on the hill. It is situated on slightly sloping ground, approximately 40m north-east of Barrow III. With a diameter of c.10m it is approximately half the size of the other cairns. A partial kerb, utilising larger stones, is visible around much of the southern and western quadrants. Disturbance in the centre, again for what seems to be the construction of a shelter, has revealed evidence for a cist. Large stones at the north and south define the width at 0.7m and the cist's long axis, oriented east-west is 1.2m long. A second smaller feature on the eastern side of the cairn may also be a cist. The precise positioning of the cairn facilitates views to the floor of the Onny Valley to the east, a view that is not available from the other cairns.



Figure 65: Cairn 214

PRN 216 Barrow V

A large cairn without any apparent structural features survives to a height of 2m and is sited on a broad summit of the southern ridge. In common with Barrow III a number of hollows, albeit smaller, have been formed, presumably to provide shelter, but these remodellings have not revealed any internal features. Adjoining the cairn to the south-east is a rectilinear feature, similar to that at Barrow I but slightly larger, measuring 7.5m x 5.5m. Views to the north are restricted by the rising ridge and summit, but impressive views are available to the Long Mynd and Stiperstones ridges to the east.

PRN 217 Barrow VI

This cairn is located on a local eminence at the south-western end of the southern ridge (Fig 66). Again, disturbance in the form of hollows to create shelters are found within the cairn and it is similar to the other cairns in that no apparent structural elements have been identified. A large boulder, recorded at 1.3m in length, is not thought to be covering slab of a cist and similar, albeit smaller boulders are also distributed across the cairn. To the north-west a rectilinear feature measuring 2.5m x 2.0m adjoins the cairn. All of the main cairns are skylined, as would the summit cairn

have been when extant. The cairn directly overlooks the hillside which provides the source of the Group XII stone. The views westwards are dominated by Lan Fawr and restricted to the north by the summit.



Figure 66: Cairn 217 as viewed from 216

4.6.3 Cluster cohesion

The monuments may be considered to constitute a dispersed grouping due to their relative proximity to each other, utilisation of the topography and relative isolation from other nearby monuments. In addition, constructional similarities suggest a certain distinctiveness. These are for the most part, large, stone built cairns with apparently little formal structure. Whilst it is problematic and often unwise to talk about structural details with unexcavated monuments, the construction of shelters within many of the cairns has exposed much of the interiors, and based on this and their similar dimensions, it would appear that the cairns were most likely constructed to a simple template. This sets them apart, both spatially and morphologically from the other barrows and cairns in the near landscape.

It is notable that Barrow IV, the 'anomaly' of the grouping, appears to be of a different structural nature and occupies a position away from the local eminence. This may represent a different rationale – the builders of this cairn were unconcerned with maintaining intervisibility within the grouping - and most likely represents a later addition to the grouping. The small possible cairns adjacent to Barrow I similarly may represent a development of the grouping, a desire by later generations to appropriate a special place. A parallel for the 'appendages' noted at Barrows I, V & VI may be found on the eastern gritstone uplands of the Peak District. Here, small sub-rectangular platforms are occasionally found attached to the circumference of barrows and sometimes cover burials (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 27).

4.6.4 Visual relationships

There is a strong visual element to the grouping at Corndon Hill, with the major cairns all intervisible (it is assumed here that the summit cairn was originally a more substantial structure Fig 67, Table 13). Whilst it may be argued that this is inevitable - the cairns mostly being positioned on the highest points of the ridge – it is clear from other groupings in the study area that local summits are as likely to have been avoided as utilised. What cannot be proved is whether the high points were chosen to maximise intervisibility.

More readily apparent is the lack of visual impact within the immediate landscape. These cairns are not readily visible from the nearby valleys but are identifiable from higher viewpoints further afield. Similarly whilst individual cairns are visible from some of the other important locations in the near vicinity, the grouping as a whole is not. This suggests two propositions which are not exclusive. The first is that an internal integrity to the grouping was envisaged from the outset with no regard to its visual impact within the immediate environs. The second suggests a consideration with the wider non-local landscape. This may be with regard to views outwards, or with views towards the hill. The placement of cairns on prominent rises along the curving ridge maximises the potential for at least a part of the grouping to be visible from many different viewpoints.

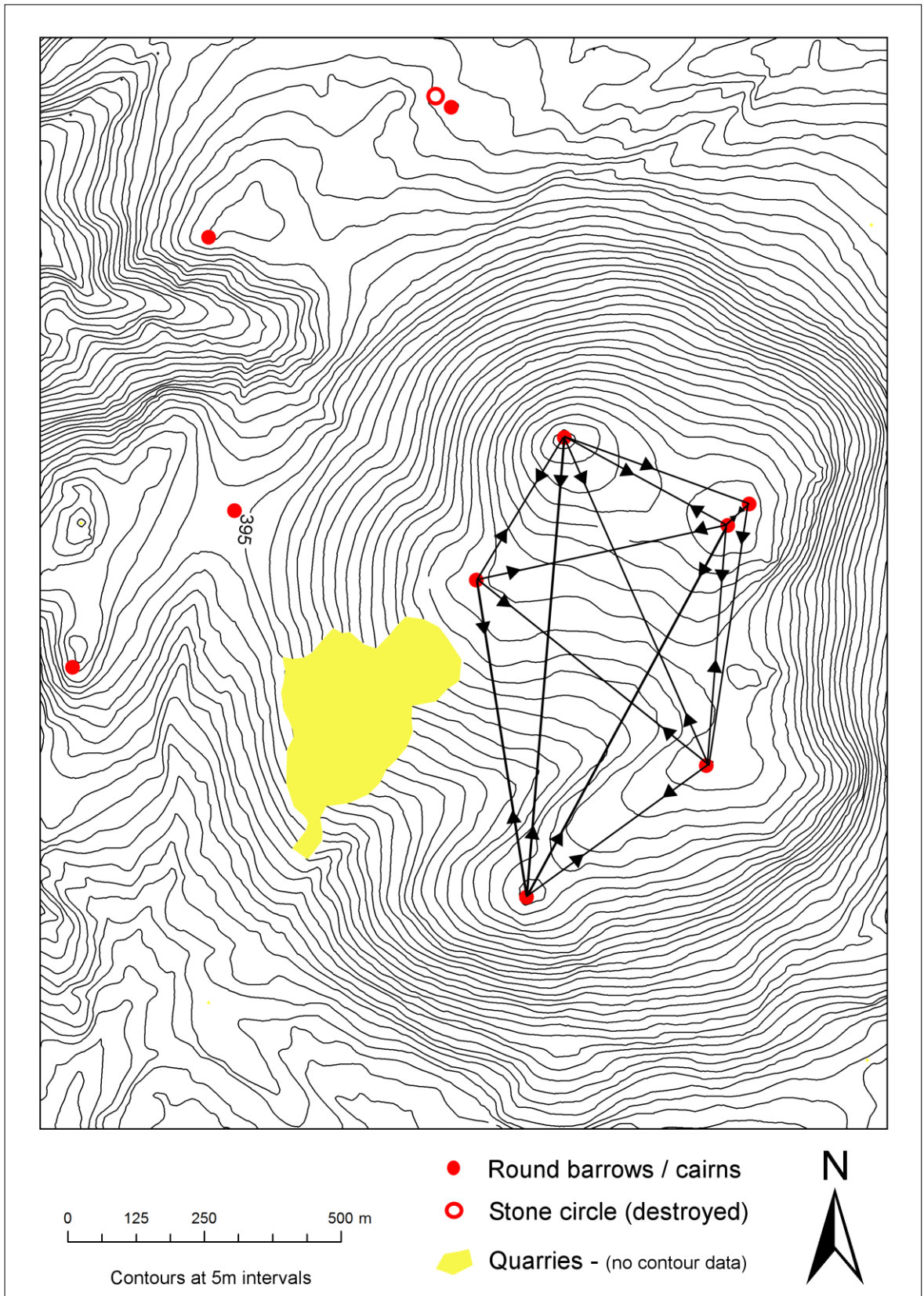


Figure 67: intervisibility at Comon Hill

Table 13: intervisibility at Cornon Hill

	Sites Visible					
PRN	213	214	215	216	217	492
213		x	x	x	x	x
214	x		x	x	x	x
215	x	x		x	x	
216	x	x	x		x	
217	x	x	x	x		
492	x	x		x		

X=site or location is visible

4.6.5 Topographic relationships

The hill is bisected by a dry valley which results in a partly encircling ridge with the cairns located atop prominent eminences along this ridge, but there is no direct visual relationship between the valley floor and the cairns. The valley floor is largely obscured when viewed from the cairns and similarly the cairns are not visible until the observer reaches the valley head.

On a macro level, Corndon is the pre-eminent topographic feature in the landscape, and the distinctiveness and visibility of the hill from many Bronze Age sites has been noted with Gibson (2002, 23) suggesting it acted as a geographical and metaphorical reference point.

4.6.6 The cluster and its place within the landscape

Whilst it is impossible to state with any certainty the precise reasons for the placement of the individual cairns, it is perhaps easier to provide an explanation for the location of the grouping. It seems clear that the cairns on Corndon can be considered a discrete entity, perhaps constructed to an overall plan or template conceived as one grouping from the outset. However, the grouping lies within a wider monumental landscape and its place within it will now be explored (Fig 68).

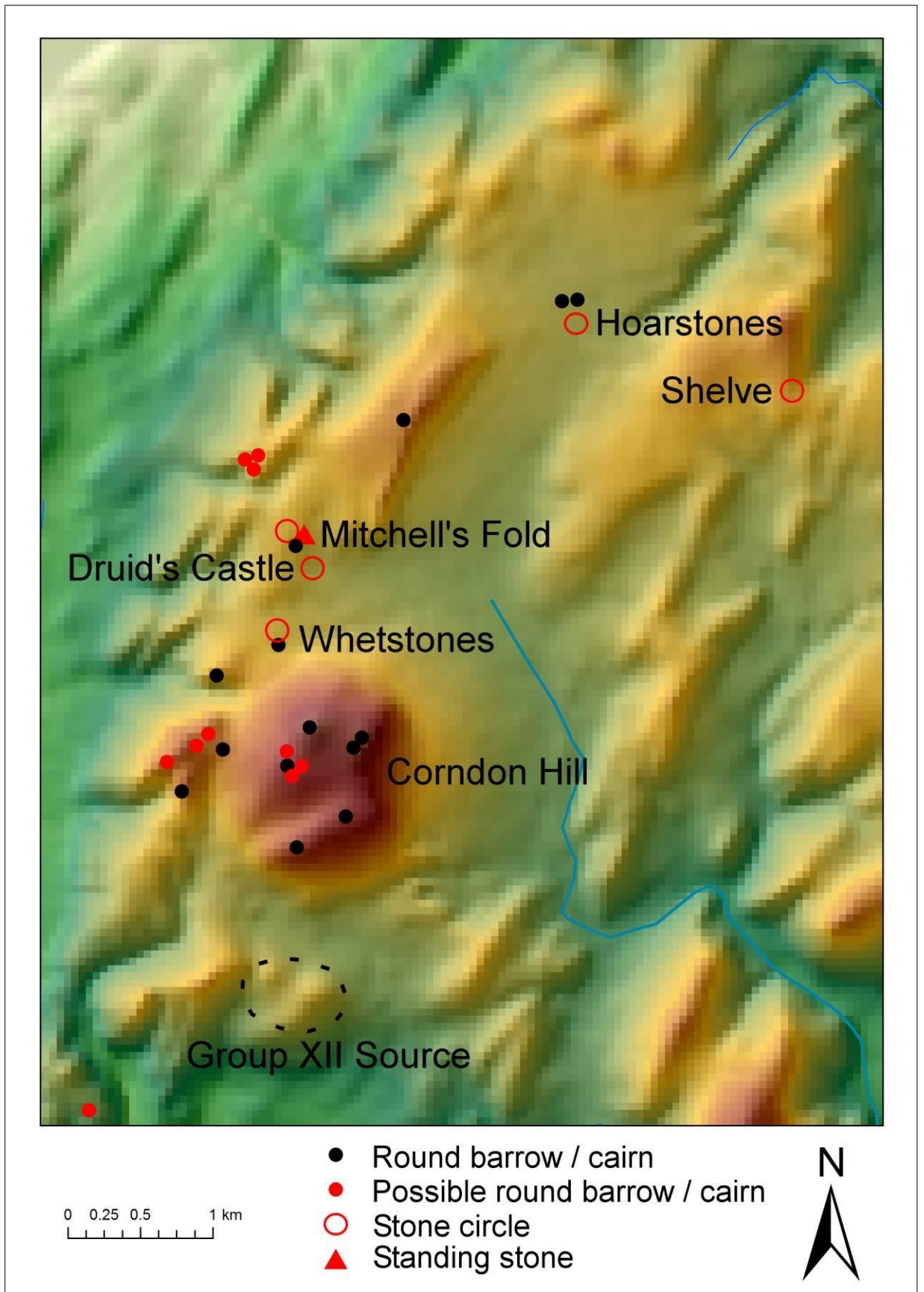


Figure 68: Corndon Hill - related sites and monuments

4.6.7 The Group XII source at Hyssington

Directly to the south of Corndon, a low, unremarkable, unnamed hill near the hamlet of Hyssington was identified by Shotton *et al.* (1951) as the likely source of picrite, a distinctive rock type used for the production of Group XII battle-axes and axe-hammers (Fig 69).



Figure 69: Axe hammer and battle axe from Hyssington..Photo 2485-0050 © CPAT

These implements are distributed widely across Wales and the West Midlands (Fig 70), with outliers found as far afield as Fife and Cornwall, but the greatest density is to be found near to the source (Shotton 1988). The majority of these implements are stray finds although some Group XII battle-axes have been found within barrows, including a small blunt-ended example accompanying the cremated remains of a child from a cist within a barrow at Gerthbeibio, Montgomeryshire (Jones 2011, 300). No radiocarbon dates are available for Group XII implements but comparable battle-axes from Scotland (Sheridan 2007, 175-6) and Ireland (Brindley 2007, 371) have been dated to the period 2100-1650 BC. Axe hammers are more problematic, with few associated finds, but are considered to derive from the same chronological period (Roe 1979, 30).

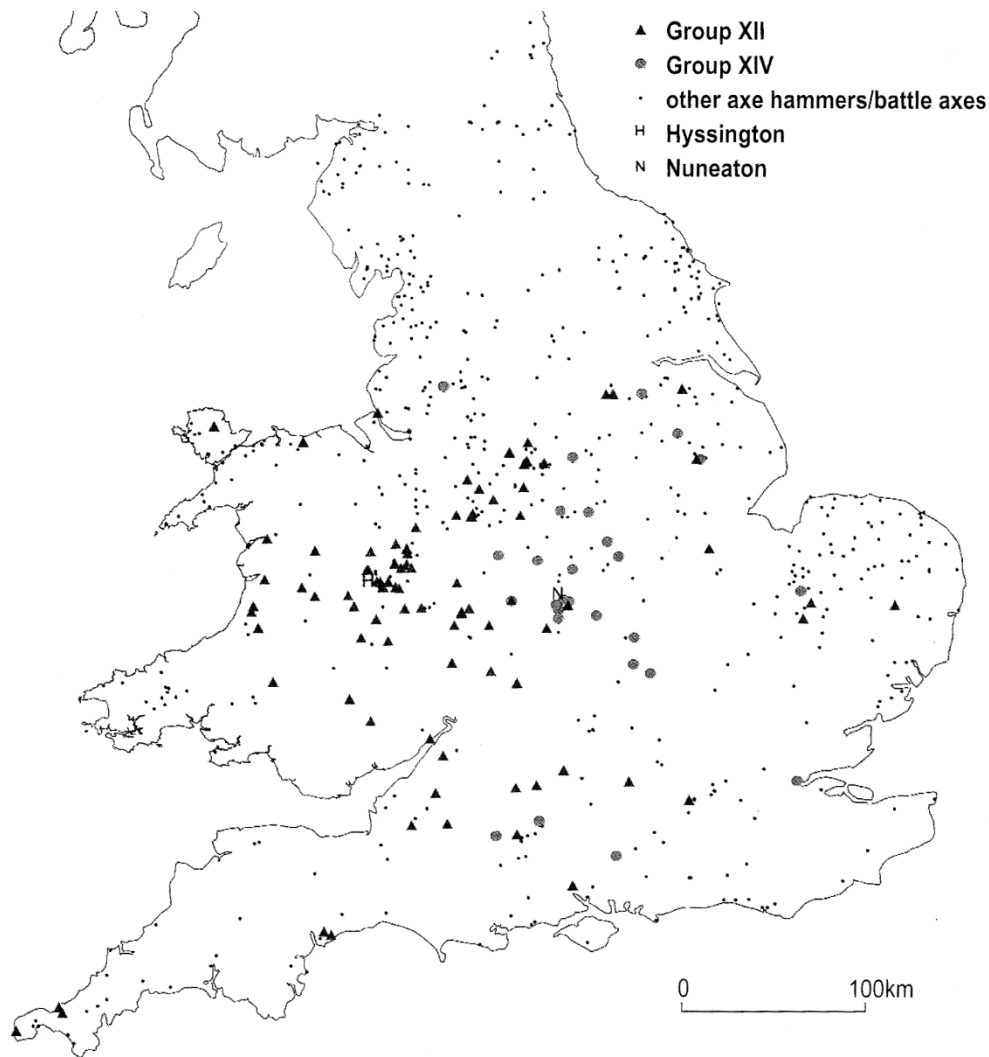


Figure 70: Distribution of Group XII implements in southern Britain (after Jones 2011)

Shotton and Chitty identified two locations on the hill - one to the north, the other to the south-east - where un-weathered rock which matched that of the implements was to be found outcropping. Further work entailing topographic and geophysical surveys and small trial trenches at and around the south-east location was undertaken by CPAT during 2007-8 (Jones 2011). Although some evidence for quarrying of the picrite was identified, no artefactual or dateable material was recovered and thus the precise location of the extraction and working sites remains elusive. It has been suggested that the northern flank of the hill may have been the favoured location for extraction due to its proximity and views to Corndon (Mullin 2012, 41) although the absence in the vicinity of rough-outs, and the hammerstones required for pecking the stone, suggests that working took place elsewhere (Jones 2011, 298; Mullin 2012, 41). There is little direct visual relation between the grouping as a whole and the picrite source with only one cairn being visible.

4.6.8 Stone circles

To the north of Corndon Hill four, and possibly five, stone circles once stretched around an arc of c.5km, only two of which remain today (Burl 2000, 95-6). The circle near Shelve church (PRN01920) is described as small and doubtful, a fortuitous combination of natural boulders and stone clearance. The Druid's Castle circle (PRN 01871) was also small and probably a four-poster before its destruction. The Whetstones (CPAT 209) may have been as large as 30m in diameter (ibid. 96) although only three uprights remained in 1841 (Hartshorne 1841, 33) and Grimes (1963, 125) included this latter circle in his corpus with some misgiving. The destruction of the Whetstones is recounted by Kenyon (1892, 272-3), describing a mass of what was thought to be 'black manganese' from beneath the stones. A workman from the barytes mine informed Kenyon that the remains had been analysed and contained human bone. It would seem likely that the workmen uncovered charcoal and cremated bone.

High on the southern end of the ridge of Stapeley Hill stands Mitchell's Fold (PRN01230), a large oval ring, now largely denuded, which seems to have attracted its own outliers including a small cairn (PRN 01869) 90m to the south-east and a standing stone (PRN 01870). The stones of the circle are for the most part low, averaging 0.5m in height, but two much larger megaliths to the south-east - only one of which remains erect - may have constituted an entrance. The circle is high and exposed with long views to the west and the view to the south dominated by Corndon. The Hoarstones stone circle, 2.5km to the north-east, lies at the foot of the northern end of Stapeley Hill on a level area of gently sloping ground at the head of the Hope Valley. Its stones are low, the site itself is inconspicuous, barely visible in the grass during the summer except for the unusual central stone. It is flanked to the north, east and west by the high ground of Callow Hill, Stapeley Hill and Shelve Hill respectively. The view to the south-west is more expansive and Corndon Hill rises in isolation, framed by a gap in the circle. Whether this was intentional or represents lost orthostats cannot be determined; Chitty noted that some of the stones were "...placed into position on the underlying bed of stiff loam, into which even the largest penetrate only a few inches' (Chitty 1926, 248).

The three larger circles all have cairns or barrows associated with them. Those located next to Mitchell's Fold and the Whetstones are largely uncontroversial but this

is not the case at the Hoarstones where two small grassy mounds are visible (Fig 71). The first published account of the barrows is sparse and simply mentions two mounds to the north and northwest of the circle "...12 feet across and 1 foot high. These may be barrows." (Thomas 1960, 171). It seems at first curious that Lily Chitty makes no mention of the mounds during her survey of the stone circle in 1924. However her notes may reveal why; upon reading of their identification by Thomas she writes; "I hope they are not our peat dumps" (File 75/1 Lily Chitty Collection, Shropshire Archives). An extensive search of the files relating to the Hoarstones in the Chitty archive could find no further reference to these 'peat dumps' and this interpretation seems unlikely. Chitty herself records ploughing in the 1960's extending to within 10m of the circle which would almost certainly destroy any mound solely comprised of peat. A topographic and geophysical survey conducted by the author at the circle elicited little further detail; a magnetic spike in the centre of Mound A is most likely a ferrous object whilst a positive anomaly in the centre of Mound B may possibly represent a pit (Johnson 2011). The small size of the mounds suggests they could cover simple cairns of similar dimensions to the excavated example at nearby Lan Fawr (Britnell 1988 and see below). It is possible that the barrows and cairns were placed in close approximation to the circles to draw upon their significance. This may accompany a change in purpose of the circles at some time in their life-cycle and what began as ceremonial places possibly associated with the extraction or distribution of the picrite stone may have changed into places suitable for ceremonies involving the dead.

It has been argued that there is a relationship between stone circles and stone implement distribution (Bradley and Edmonds 1993, 98; Burl 2000, 116). Darvill et al. (2003, 32) suggest the stone circles on the south side of the Preseli Hills acted as the physical manifestation of social networks, the foci for interactions between the inhabitants and those in pursuit of stone for implements. A rather different interpretation of the relationship of stone circles and stone sources has been suggested for the tightly clustered group of circles, barrows and cairns of Penmaenmawr, close to the Group VII source at Graig Lwyd. Rather than facilitating the dissemination of stone implements, Price (2007) has argued that the monuments at Penmaenmawr structured the approach to Graig Lwyd for growing numbers of pilgrims, with the axes acting as tokens of completion. It is noteworthy that the picrite source at Hyssington is obscured by the Corndon massif from the majority of the monuments in the wider landscape and this is echoed elsewhere. New data suggests

the source of the dolerite bluestone utilised at Stonehenge may be on the northern slopes of the Preseli hills (Bevins et al 2014) and thus hidden from the nearby stone circles.

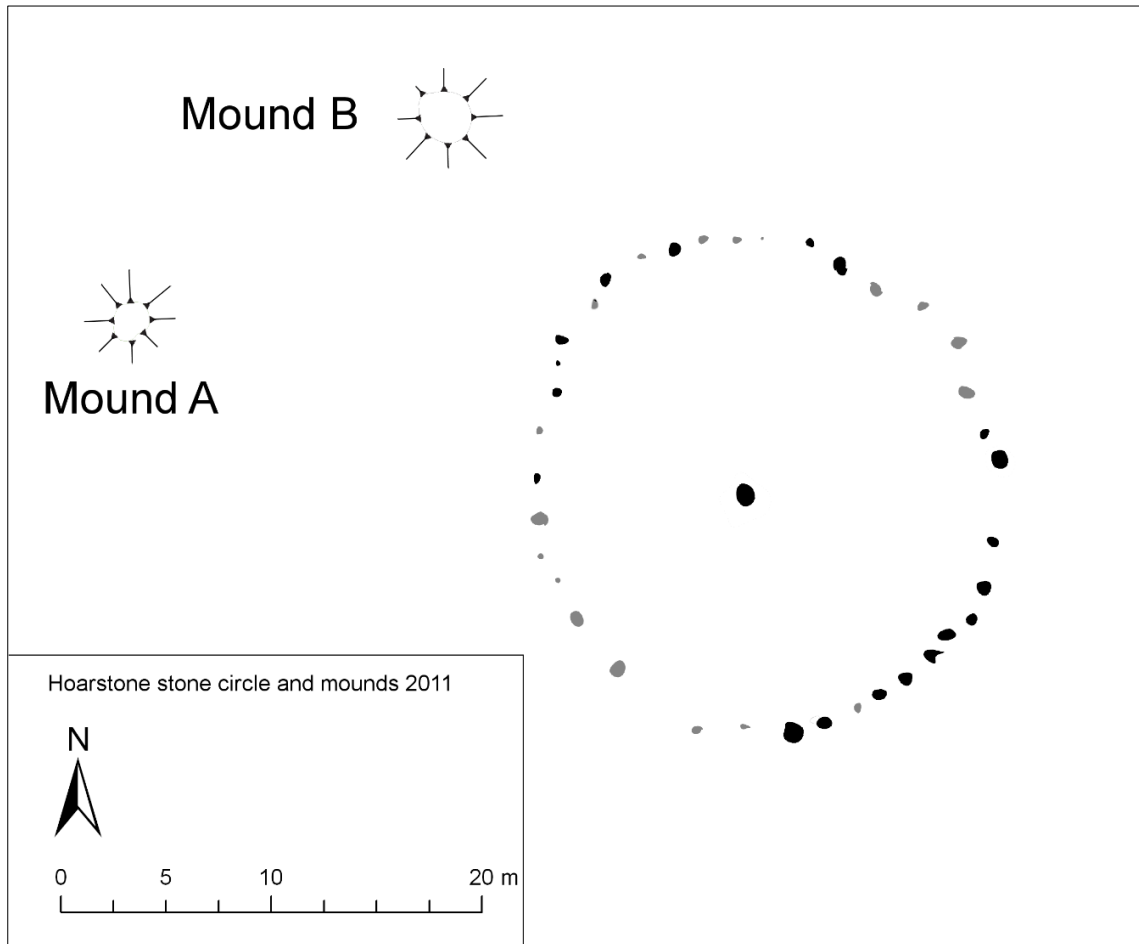


Figure 71: Hoarstones circle and barrows (survey by author)

4.6.9 Barrows and cairns

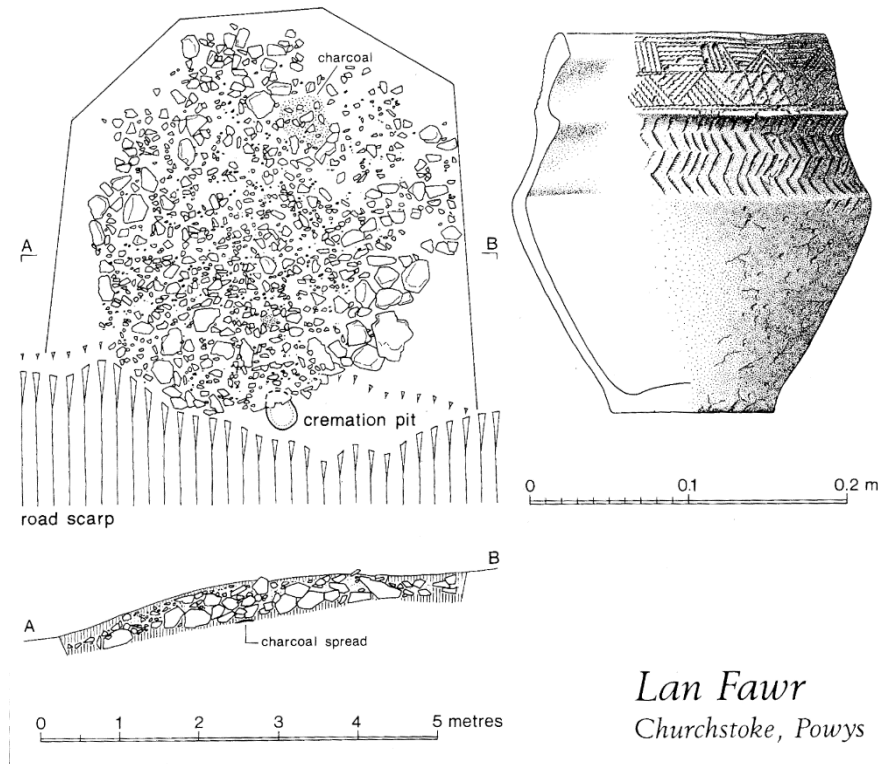
A number of barrows and cairns are distributed in the immediate landscape, all of which, with the exception of the possible cairns on Todleth Hill 2.5km to the south-west, lie to the north of Corndon.

The cairn (PRN 01873) located below the summit of Stapeley Hill and broadly equidistant between Mitchell's Fold and the Hoarstones appears to be a ring cairn with a central mound. If this is the case it shares similar topographic characteristics to the ring cairns described at Cefn Penagord . To the north-west of Stapeley Hill there are two or three small, possible barrows on Middlton Hill, close to the cruciform pillow

mound recorded under the PRN1868. A shallow ditch is apparent at one of these mounds.

A barrow (PRN 5666) is situated at the highest point of the col separating Corndon from Lan Fawr. Damage by forestry operations in 2006 enabled a small scale excavation which revealed that unlike the high cairns, this was a composite barrow constructed of turf and soil with stone elements including a kerb, or ring of stones, placed directly on the old ground surface and a layer of stones covering the turf mound (Britnell *et al* 2008) . Environmental remains from the mound material and a buried soil indicate land clearance resulting in grassland and an open woodland environment of hazel scrub, with some alder and ash. South from the col, a cairn 5m in diameter and 0.5m high, covered an inverted Collared Urn placed in a rock-cut pit (Figure 72). A small amount of cremated bone - the remains of a 2-year old child - was recovered from the pit. A radiocarbon date of 2110-1690 cal BC (3530 ±70 CAR - 1037) was obtained from in-situ charcoal from the cremation pit and a date of 1860-1450 cal BC (3330 ±70 CAR - 1038) from a charcoal spread in the buried soil beneath the cairn. The size of the cairn and its date lends credence to the possibility of similar Early Bronze Age origins for the satellite cairns adjacent to Barrow I on Corndon.

A number of features on Lan Fawr have been dismissed as possible prehistoric cairns but examination during a field visit in 2011 would suggest that in at least one case there is a strong possibility that a feature is likely to be a cairn. The HER record (PRN 4540) describes the site as being formerly noted as a cairn but redefined as a natural outcrop, partly dug into, and topped by a large irregular block. The site occupies a position atop a knoll to the south-east of the main summit of Lan Fawr with wide ranging views except to the east which is dominated by Corndon Hill. Careful examination of the ground surface around the stone block revealed an area of approximately 7m by 4m of stone fragments protruding through the turf cover. The cairns noted on the broad ridge of Lan Fawr are perhaps more difficult to decipher, partly due to their landscape position. They may well be clearance cairns of more recent date, but the possibility of earlier origins, especially in the light of the Collared Urn burial excavated from the lower slopes of Lan Fawr, should not be dismissed and would benefit from excavation.



Lan Fawr
Churchstoke, Powys

Figure 72: Lan Fawr excavation (after Britnell 1988)

The diversity, in terms of morphology and landscape position, of the barrows and cairns in this landscape would suggest that a variety of concerns were represented and that round barrows may have served multiple functions. Although it cannot be said they were constructed by a single group of people, it is likely that the significance of the place, perhaps a result of the discovery and utilisation of picrite, is what drew these structures. The Corndon cairns most likely represent a coherent grouping within this wider cluster and their highly visible placement signalled a presence to a wider populace. The barrow between Lan Fawr and Corndon marked the pass between the picrite source and the stone circles and cairns. Gibson (2002, 23) has suggested that as passes are boundaries of naturally defined land units, barrows placed at these locations may have territorial significance. Equally, architecture can serve as transitional points between domains and emphasise difference or exclusion (Parker Pearson and Richards 1994, 24). Perhaps this barrow divided the landscape, symbolically drawing attention to the special nature of what lay beyond – the source of picrite. The monuments directly adjacent to the stone circles may represent the last stages in rituals or ceremonies conducted at the circles. The proximity of the cairns on Corndon Hill to the stone source may suggest close ties, perhaps raised to cover the remains of specialists intimately involved with the extraction or dissemination of stone from Hyssington.

The monumental landscape at Corndon represents something different to the slowly developing multi-period landscapes of places such as the Walton Basin, a few miles to the west (Gibson 1999; Britnell and Jones 2012). At Corndon it was not the memory of a place or ancestral attachment which provided the impetus for monument building - there is little evidence of Neolithic occupation in the landscape, the only postulated Neolithic monument, the New House Long Barrow (Gibson 2002, 4), was excavated by Alex Gibson in 2012 and found to be a natural rock outcrop (N Jones pers com 2013). Hyssington, unlike many other stone sources, does not appear to have its origins in the Neolithic, the products manufactured from its stone have their currency during the Early Bronze Age. Larger circles such as Mitchell's Fold and Hoarstones are generally regarded as earlier forms, but if the stone circles at Corndon are associated with stone extraction and dissemination as Burl (2000, 96-8) suggests, this then implies construction during the Early Bronze Age. Indeed, the four poster circle of Druid's Castle is of a type thought to date from the latter part of this period (Burl 2000, 96). Of course, the circles may not have been used contemporaneously and this may account for both variety of form and location but an argument can be posited that it was the discovery of picrite, and its proximity to a dramatic natural landscape feature, that provided the impetus for the construction of the stone circles, round barrows and cairns in this landscape.



Figure 73: The main summit of Corndon Hill is in the centre with the ridge to the right. To the left is the col and Lan Fawr. Photograph by Robbie Austrums

4.7 Cluster D: The Long Mynd, Shropshire

The Long Mynd forms part of the Shropshire Hills, an area of upland in the south-west of the county, and lies approximately 14km to the south-west of Shrewsbury (Fig 63). Although not the highest hill in the borderlands, it is the largest at 12km in length and up to 6km in width. Its summit plateau is extensive, incised on the eastern flanks by deep valleys whereas the west presents an escarpment that is unbroken for much of its length. The density of extant round barrows on the Long Mynd is unparalleled on the English side of the border in the study area.

The first detailed study of the Long Mynd barrows was conducted by local geologist E.S. Cobbold and colleagues in the late 19th century (Cobbold 1904). Although many of the barrows were previously recorded by the Ordnance Survey, Cobbold identified others and noted morphological details, dividing the barrow forms into three classes – round tops, flat tops and peculiar.

It is apparent from the hollowed centres of many of the barrows that disturbance has occurred in the past, although there is only one, near contemporary, report. Hartshorne (1841, 100) records that one of the pair of barrows known as Robin Hood's Butts was "...opened, but whether owing to the natural unproductiveness of the barrow, or to the interment having been missed through the unskillfulness of the labourers who were employed, nothing was discovered".

More recent work has included aerial survey by Whimster (1989) and also by the Marches Uplands Mapping Project (Stoertz 2004) in conjunction with the Marches Uplands Survey (Dinn and Edwards 2004). This latter project included small-scale excavation and environmental sampling at the Shooting Box barrow (a full account of this barrow can be found within Chapter 3). A large proportion of the Long Mynd is owned by the National Trust which conducted its own archaeological survey in 1995 (Woodside & Milln 1995)

In common with much of the uplands of the study area there are no attested Neolithic monuments, but some evidence of occupation or utilisation of the Long Mynd prior to the Early Bronze Age comes from chance finds of lithic material (data from Shropshire HER). A polished stone axe was found in marshy ground some 300m to the east of the Robin Hood's Butts round barrows, and on lower ground immediately

adjacent to the plateau a small scatter of lithics included a fragment from a polished axe from a field to the north on the Bethcott Hills. Finds from the period under consideration are largely restricted to lithics including two stone axe-hammers from Ratlinghope to the west of Long Mynd and an axe-hammer recorded as being found near Smethcott, a hamlet on the northern slopes. Also to the west a palstave and a flat axe were found near Fir Tree Farm. Artefacts recorded from the top of the plateau are few; a small lithic scatter was found close to the conjoined ring cairns and the Portway during tree planting and included a plano convex knife and thumbnail scraper. A stone bracer fragment with two perforations, one of only three from the wider study area, was found on Black Knoll (Woodward and Hunter 2011, fig 1.1). The exact find site is unknown but a nearby barrow (PRN 1559) appears to have been opened at some point and may have been the source.

The evidence for the contemporary environment comes from the excavation at Shooting Box (Dinn *et al* 2004, 71-5) and indicates an open grassland environment that was gradually cleared of oak and lime woodland in the Early Bronze Age. Although cereal microfossils were identified, the lack of pollen would suggest that the cereals were grown elsewhere.

A number of trackways are found on the Long Mynd and of particular interest is the Portway. It has been suggested that this route, an important drove road from Bishop's Castle to the markets at Shrewsbury from the 13th century onwards, has prehistoric origins (Woodside & Milln 1995, 15, 25). Three linear earthworks or cross dykes have been identified on the eastern spurs. Radiocarbon dating of charcoal from a buried soil beneath the Devil's Mouth Cross Dyke (Dinn *et al* 2004) located between the Carding mill and Townbrook valleys, returned date ranges of 1520-1320 (Oxa-5082; 3155±45 BP) and 1490-1260 cal BC (OxA-5083; 3105±45BP).

Although subject to periodic cultivation - the evidence for which are "Celtic fields" on the lower slopes of Black Knoll (Crawford 1954) and narrow cultivation ridges, most likely post-medieval (Stoertz 2004, 33) – the Long Mynd has largely escaped enclosure. This may, in part, explain the survival of so many barrows. The plateau was part of the Long Forest royal forest (Ley Bazeley 1921) and when surveyed in 1235 it was recorded that the oak and underwood were well kept, but by 1309 parts of the Long Mynd were disafforested (Baugh 1998).

4.7.1 Topography

The Long Mynd is a dissected upland plateau (Fig 74) and is formed from Pre-Cambrian sedimentary rocks, chiefly sandstones, shales and conglomerates (Earp and Hains 1971, 21-5). The hill is considered to rise at Plowden in the south, on the banks of the the River Onny, and continues north-north-east for just over 7km to reach its highest point, Pole Bank (516m OD) before descending a further 6 km to a cluster of hamlets at Woolstaston. The western aspect for the most part is an unbroken escarpment, whilst to the east steep, narrow valleys, termed batches or hollows, have created a series of south-eastwards trending spurs. The narrow Stretton Valley to the east divides the Long Mynd from the whaleback hills of The Lawley, Caer Caradoc and Ragleth Hill. The plateau is bounded to the west by the River East Onny and the Darnford Brook before the land rises again to form the shattered quartzite ridge of Stiperstones. For much of its area the Long Mynd is open moorland with acidic soils conducive to heather and bilberry cover (Allott 2011, 76), although there is also a sizeable forest plantation to the south which restricts views from two barrows (PRN 1242, 261). A number of ponds are present on the plateau but most were constructed by excavation or damming to provide water for livestock (Musgrove 2008, 5).

The near views from the plateau are of those landforms described above but extensive vistas are also to be gained. Corndon and the Stiperstones are the most prominent features to the west but further landmarks include the Berwyn and the Cambrian mountain ranges of Wales. To the north and north-east the lowlands of the Shrewsbury Plain and Cheshire can be viewed and, to the southeast and the south, the Clee Hills and Clun Forest are notable landmarks.

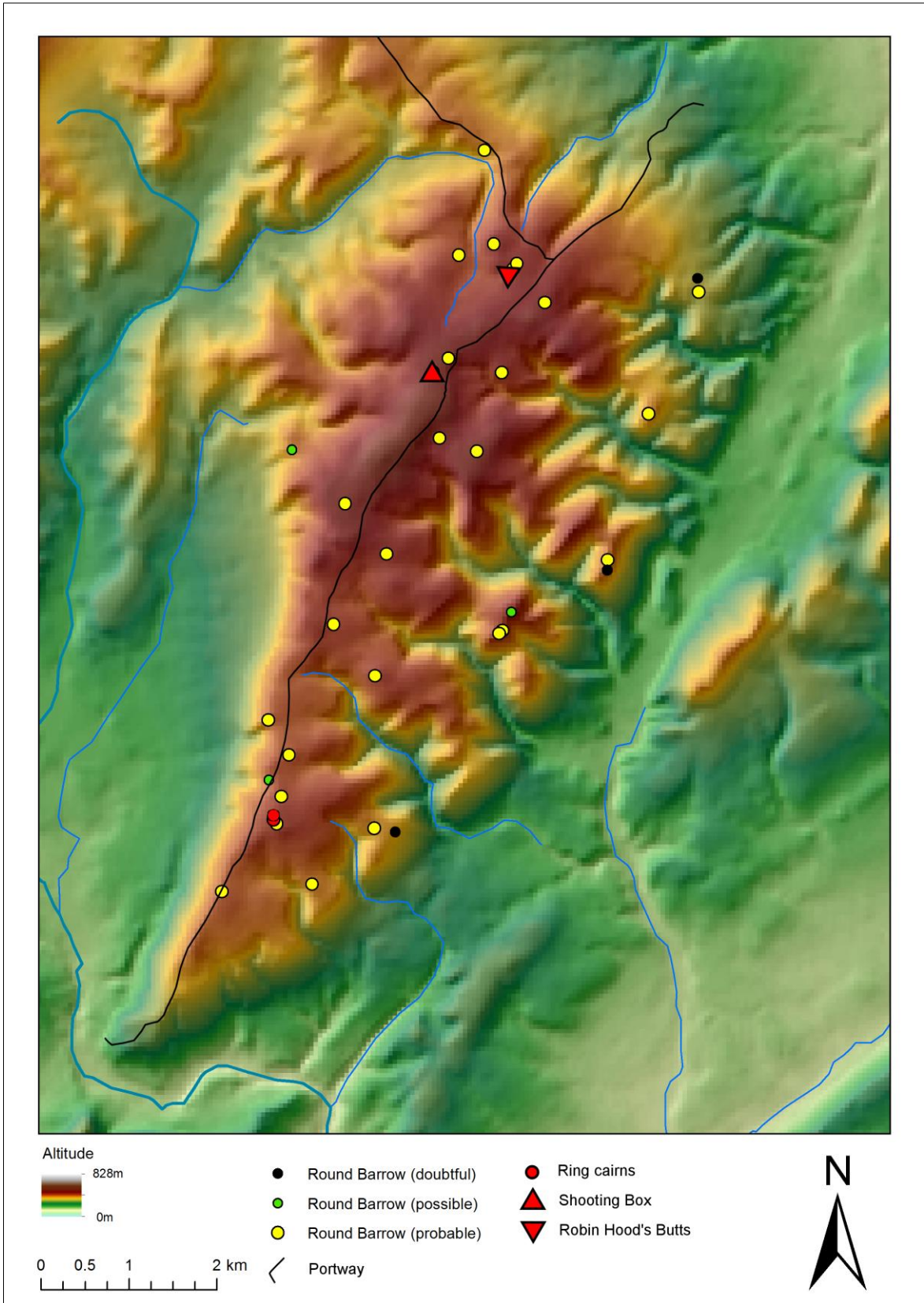


Figure 74: location of the Long Mynd cluster

4.7.2 Description of the Cluster

Distributed across this hill, and to the subsidiary slopes to the north, are 36 recorded barrows and cairns (Figure 76), three of which are doubtful (236, 1243, 1898) and a further four which are considered as possible barrows (1246, 1262, 4537, 4787). An attempt was made to locate sites considered 'lost' but in no cases were the sites found.

All of the barrows have a covering of vegetation, mainly heather and bilberry, but in many cases stone is visible in the mound, particularly where the barrow has been disturbed. This would indicate that a number of the barrows may be cairns, or composite structures incorporating stone and earth. An exception to this is Shooting Box (PRN 198 – Fig 75) which is constructed of earth and turves (Dinn *et al* 2004, 71).



Figure 75: Shooting Box barrow

The outward appearance of the majority of the barrows appears to be that of simple mounds with little constructional elaboration although exceptions are described below. As noted by Cobbold (1904, 34), a number of sites have flattened tops and, whilst it is difficult to be certain from surface inspection alone, there is a possibility

that a proportion of these are intentional rather than the result of the opening of the barrow.

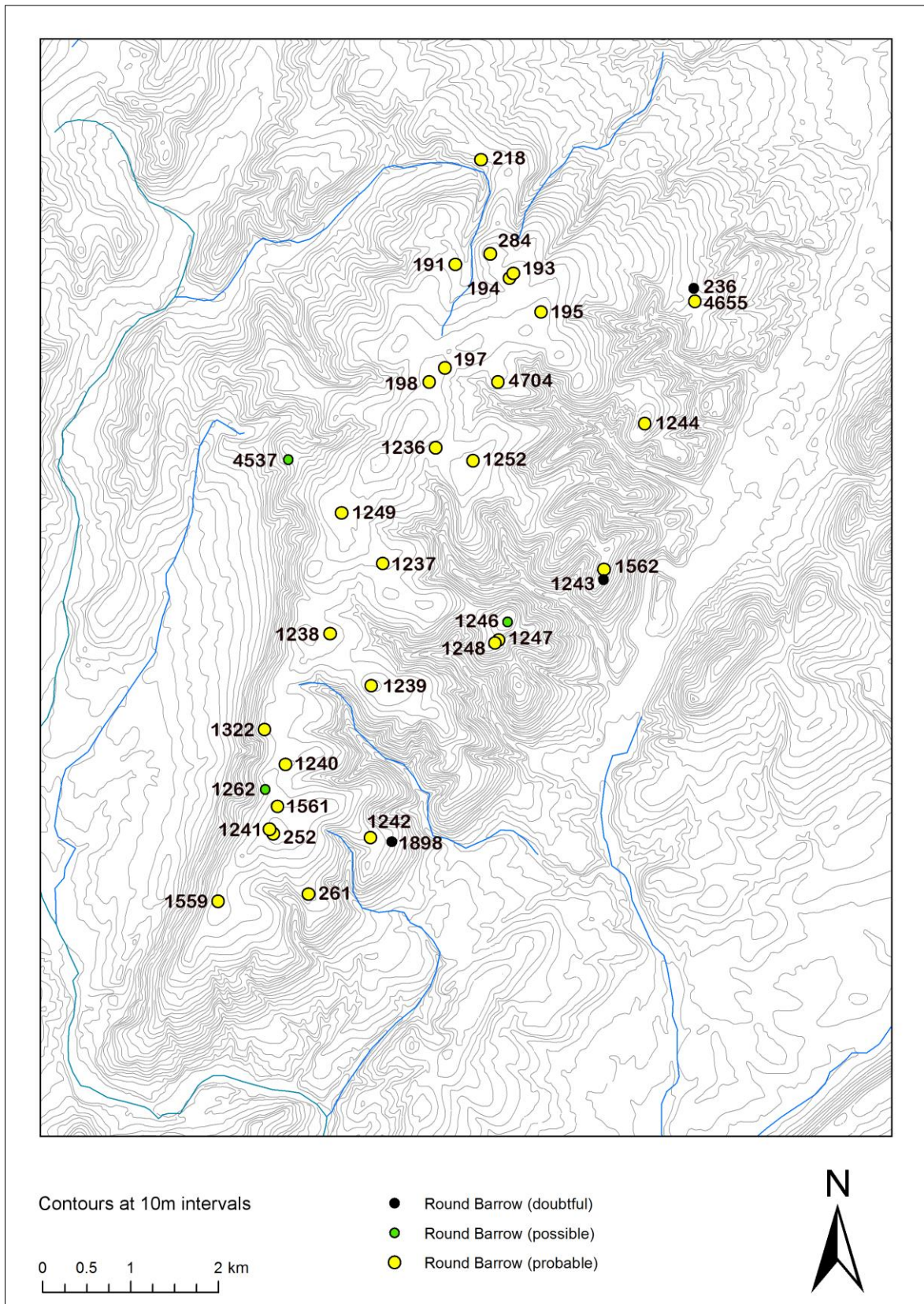


Figure 76: Location of sites at Long Mynd cluster

The diameters of most of the round barrows on Long Mynd lie between 10-25m with the greatest number in the 10-15m range and as such the barrows follow the general trend for the study area (Fig 77, Table 14). There is some differentiation with regard to size as most of the larger barrows (i.e. those over 20m in diameter) are to be found extending north from Shooting Box. The anomalies at either end of the scale are worth noting. The smallest example (PRN 1238) has a recorded diameter of 5m but Cobbold (1904, 42) indicated that a 'paving' could be seen to extend to a diameter of c.9m. The two largest examples are particularly noteworthy as they are deemed to be examples of 'fancy barrows' of the type more commonly found in the south of England. The Shooting Box barrow mound is 21m but its concentric outer bank holds a diameter of 54m and there is circumstantial evidence that the bank is earlier than the mound (Dinn *et al* 2004, 75).

The southern barrow at Robin Hood's Butts (PRN 194) is the largest mound on the Long Mynd with a diameter of 34m and a height of 4.2m and is a curious earthwork. Whilst it is often referred to as a bell barrow this is perhaps a misnomer. The barrow has no bank or ditch but a stepped profile which Cobbold (1904, 37) described as appearing to be a small mound constructed on the flat top of a larger mound. This barrow is paired with another barrow which has a ditch, a seemingly unique constructional feature for the Long Mynd (Fig 78).

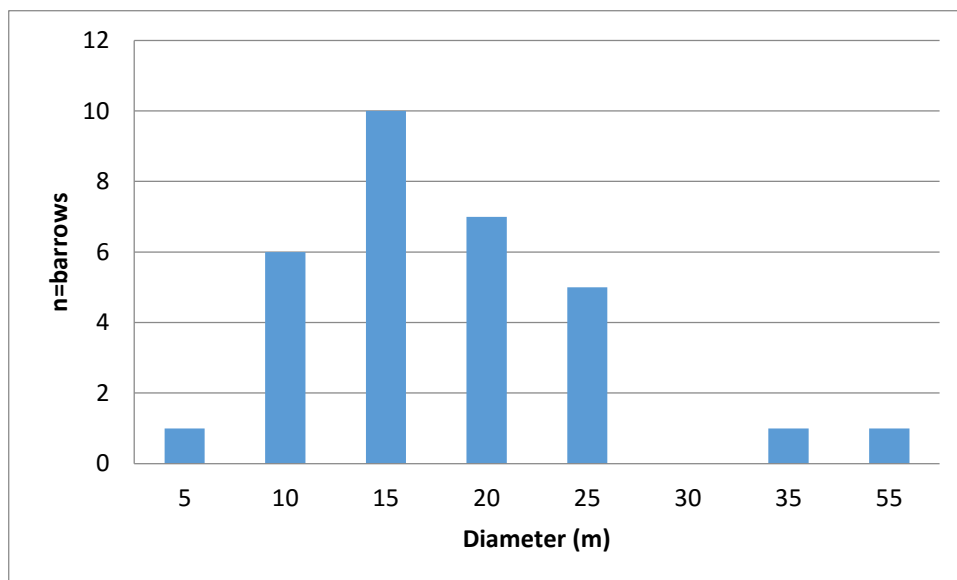


Figure 77: diameters of Long Mynd barrows

A further pair of monuments lies to the south, close to Synalds Knoll (PRN 1241, 252). Here, two features interpreted as conjoined ring cairns, are located a few meters downslope and to the west of the local summit on land utilised as a private

airstrip for the local gliding club. The attribution of ring cairns to some features within HER records can sometimes be a cause for concern - in some cases it is evident that the disturbance of a barrow in the past has resulted in a characteristic 'doughnut' shaped earthwork which is later misinterpreted. To clarify this it was intended to survey the cairns and although permission was granted, problems with survey equipment meant that the survey could not be undertaken during the period allowed by the gliding club. Field observations would suggest that the cairns may well be robbed out barrows.



Figure 78: The paired barrows of Robin Hood's Butts (194 to the right and 193 to the left).

Table 14: Long Mynd cluster data

PRN	Name (HER)	Diameter (m)	Nearest neighbour (m)
191	200m NW Wildmoor Pool	19	416
193	540m E Wildmoor Pool (Robin Hood's Butts)	21	71
194	Duckley Nap (Robin Hood's Butts)	35	71
195	500m SE of Duckley Nap	20	524
197	200m NE of Shooting Box, Wildmoor	21	240
198	Shooters Hut	21	240
218	300m N of Upper Darnford	22	1075
252	Synalds Knoll	15	62
261	Botley Stone ring cairn	9	799
284	Henley Nap	15	345
1236	100m NE of Boiling Well	12	449
1237	650m SE of Pole Cottage	19	739
1238	Round Hill	5	754
1239	Minton Hill	11	754
1240	Synalds Knoll	18	361
1241	Conjoined ring cairns Synalds Knoll	10	0
1241	Conjoined ring cairns Synalds Knoll	14	0
1242	Prior's Holt Hill	14	247
1244	Bodbury Hill	12	1501
1247	Grindle Nills	12	54
1248	Grindle Nills	10	54
1249	W of Pole Cottage	24	739
1252	ESE of Boiling Well	8	449
1322	SW of Gliding club	7	463
1559	E of Myndtown	17	995
1561	S of Gliding clubhouse	8	238
1562	Ashlett Hill	12	114
4655	Plush Hill	13	151
4704	Calf Ridge	16	626

Doubtful barrows

PRN	Name (HER)	Diameter (m)	Nearest neighbour (m)
236	Near Plush Hill	?	151
1243	Lost round barrow Ashlett Hill	7	114
1898	Prior's Holt Tumps	5	247

Possible barrows

PRN	Name (HER)	Diameter (m)	Nearest neighbour
1246	Grindle Nills	12	232
1262	Remains of bowl barrow	15	238
4537	Medlicott Cottage	?	863
4787	NNW of Coppice Farm	10	1924

Outliers

PRN	Name (HER)	Diameter (m)	Nearest neighbour (m)
190	Cothercott Hill	19	1580
217	750m NE of Castle Ring	21	1534

4.7.3 Cluster cohesion

Although not usually described in the literature as a discrete cemetery, this group of barrows is often considered together because of its topographic situation and relative isolation from other barrow clusters. Due to the dispersed nature of the barrows it is difficult to argue that they form a single coherent grouping - distance is maintained between barrows, with the majority separated by at least 300m, and often much more (Table 14). However, distinct groups do occur towards the northern and southern reaches of the distribution and include paired barrows. These groups are situated at transitional points in the landscape, namely where the plateau begins to level out at the northern and southern extremes. These transitional points, at Robin Hood's Butts and Synalds Knoll, are emphasised by the utilisation of distinct barrow morphologies not evident elsewhere on the plateau.

There is some element of linearity to the clusters. To the north three barrows - 284, 194 and 195 - are aligned. The other possible linear arrangement is that of the Synalds Knoll barrows. Whilst it is possible these alignments are fortuitous and unintended, there is a commonality in that both groups incorporate a barrow located just off the local summit at their southern extremes.

Whilst it would seem then that there is little cohesion to the placement of barrows on the Long Mynd there is some evidence to suggest an overarching rationale for barrow placement. There appears to be a wider patterning with regard to location of the barrows and this is described in the topography section below.

4.7.4 Visual relationships

The visual relationships of the barrows can be discerned by reference to Figure 79 and Table 15. Some of the barrows were difficult or impossible to discern due to their vegetation cover and low height but their exact position could be seen. In these cases they have been included as possibly visible.

Where barrows are located on summits, or just off them, they occasionally appear as skylined features from some locations including other barrows, but for the most part these views were restricted to the near vicinity. The barrows positioned away from

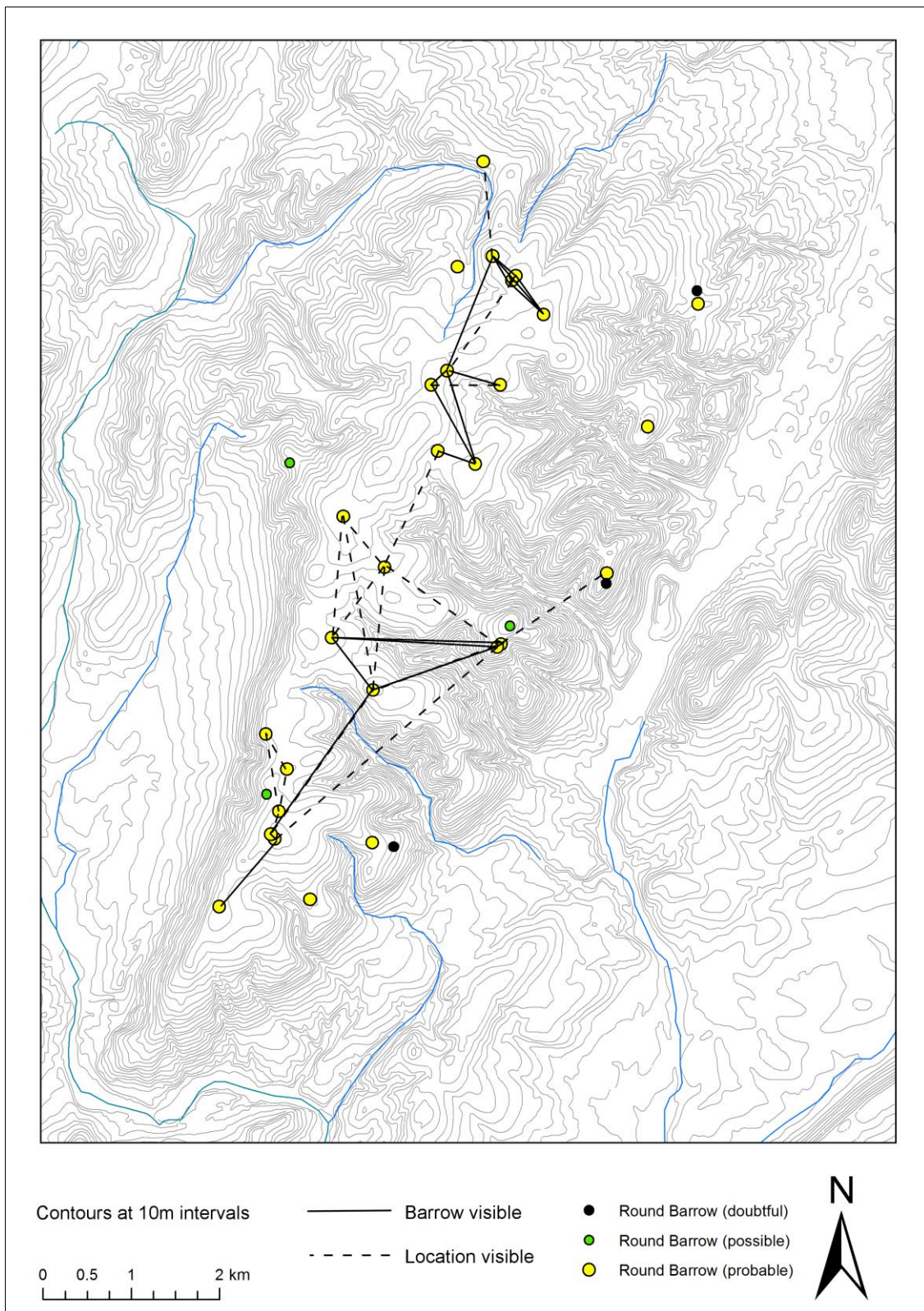


Figure 79: intervisibility at Long Mynd cluster

the summits are less visible from afar and their relatively diminutive nature would mean that they may have been just as difficult to see regardless of the vegetation cover at the time. Most of the barrows afford extensive views either to the east, west, or both but views north and/or south are mostly restricted due to the plateau dominating the near horizon.

The range of intervisibility between barrows is limited within the cluster and not all views are reciprocal. This is not due solely to barrow size as even the large, seemingly prominent barrows have a limited visual catchment. The cluster of barrows to the north are intervisible (for example PRN 193, 194, 195, 284) but share limited visual relationships with those barrows to the immediate southwest which includes Shooting Box. Of particular note is the lack of intervisibility between the barrows located on the spurs to the east with each other and to the barrows of the main ridge. These barrows are difficult to discern from other locations in and around the area and thus do not act as highly visible markers in the landscape. The prime visual imperative from these barrows is outwards, to the near hills to the east and the Stretton Gap. It would appear then that the maintenance of intervisibility between barrows was of no particular concern and as such other factors regarding placement should be sought.

4.7.5 Topographic relationships

The barrows occupy three distinct topographic zones on the plateau (Fig 80). The first is that of the watershed whose undulating line is followed closely by the Portway. A large number of barrows are located close to this point although the watershed summits are only utilised at the northern and southern ends of the massif. Here, the tightest concentrations of barrows are to be found, perhaps demonstrating that these are significant transitional points in the landscape. A number of small, not particularly conspicuous barrows are located just east of the watershed and the Portway at the point where the main spurs of the plateau extend eastwards. The final zone in which barrows are to be found is the terminal end of the spurs to the east, overlooking the Stretton Gap and the hills to the east. All of the spurs, with a single exception, have at least one barrow placed close to the point at which the terrain drops sharply to the valley floor. The barrow on Minton Hill (PRN 1239) is the exception and is located partway along the spur to the west of the rising summit. As such its orientation is to

that of the main plateau and it is reasonable to suppose that it is more akin to the barrows located in the transitional zone between ridge and spur than with those located at the spur terminals. There is one anomalous barrow to this pattern- the barrow at Wildmoor Pool (PRN 191) - which occupies an isolated position in a steep valley to the north.

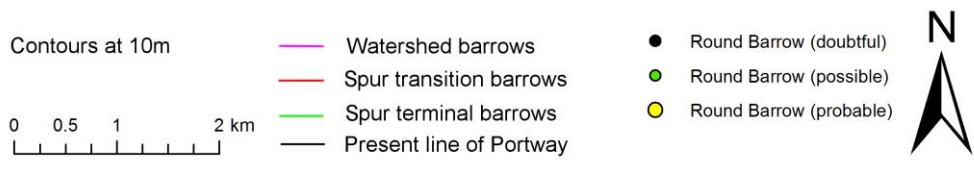
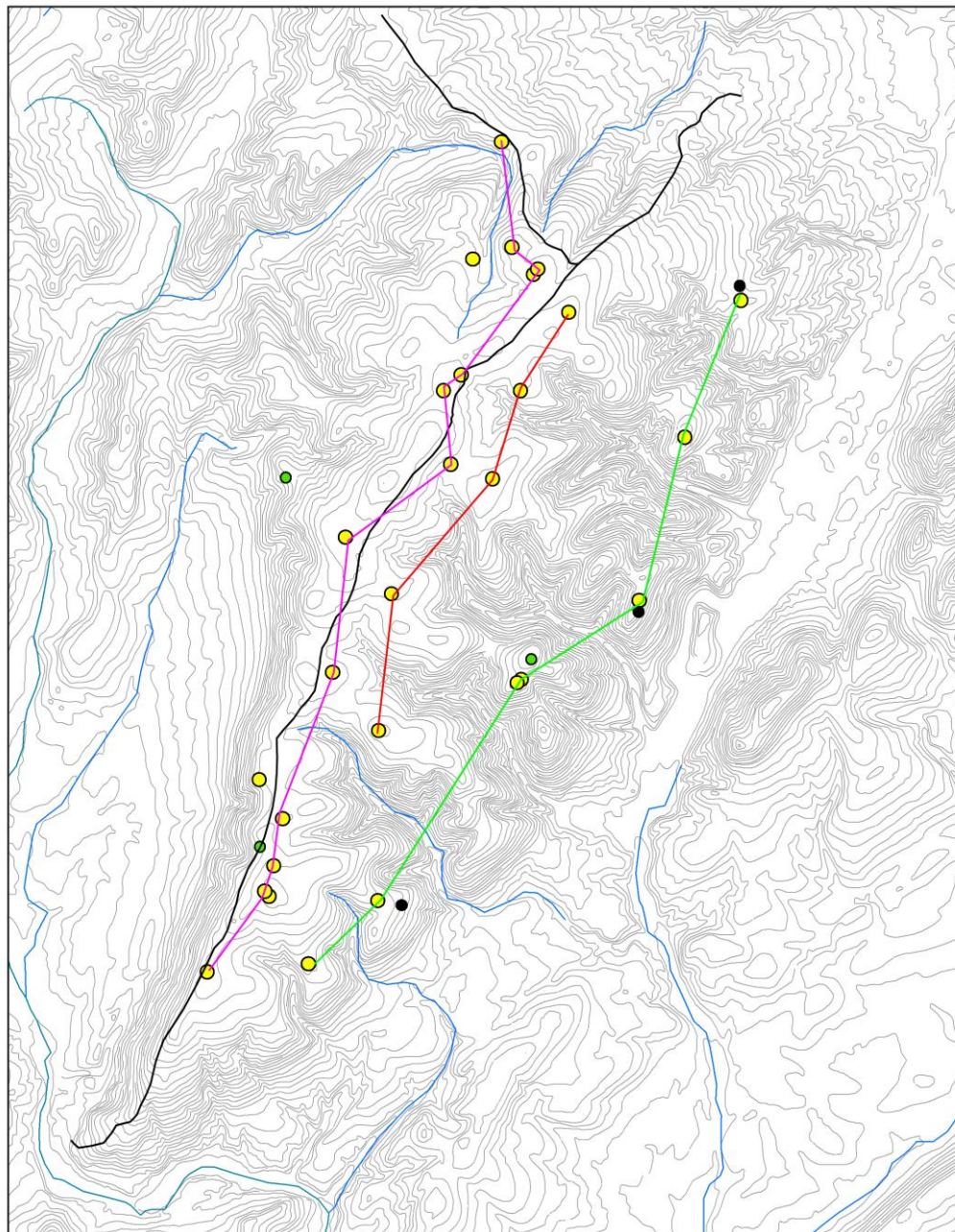


Figure 80: Topographic zoning of round barrows on Long Mynd

Table 15: intervisibility at cluster

PRN	Sites visible																												
	191	193	194	195	197	198	218	252	261	284	1236	1237	1238	1239	1240	1241	1242	1244	1247	1248	1249	1252	1322	1559	1561	1562	4655	4704	
191																													
193			X	X						X																			
194		X		X						X																			
195		X	X							X																			
197			xp							X												X						xp	
198					X																	X						xp	
218																													
252																X													
261																													
284		X	X	X			xp																						
1236												xp										X							
1237												xp	xp								xp	xp							
1238													xp	xp							X	X							
1239													X			X					X	X							
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1559								X																					
1561																													
1562																													
4655																													
4704					X																		xp						

X=site visible xp=site location visible

4.7.6 The cluster and its place within the landscape

It has been suggested that the watershed round barrows may have acted as route markers along the line of the Portway, or that the Portway may have formed a territorial boundary with the barrows indicating land ownership on either side of the track; as such, the trackway may have predated the barrows (Woodside & Milln 1995, 15). It is unlikely that the round barrows were used to navigate a route across the plateau. The evidence concerning visibility, gathered during the fieldwork, appears to contradict this; an observer cannot utilise the watershed barrows to follow a route from one end of the plateau to another as the barrows are often inconspicuous or obscured, thus negating their waymarking effect. It is also difficult to agree with the suggestion that the watershed barrows act as territorial markers. The terrain to the west of the watershed drops steeply away; in effect there is no useable land to speak of. Perhaps then the most likely rationale is that these barrows lined a preexisting route, that marked by the Portway. The avoidance of local summits along much of the watershed, most notably the highest point, Pole Bank, may favour this interpretation; it is easier to contour around these rises than to travel over them, although, as has been noted at other sites in this chapter, such avoidance may have been for different reasons. The Portway may have been recognised as a thoroughfare, allowing the passage of people and animals, with grazing available a short distance either side.

Beyond the corridor of the Portway the spurs to the east may have been reserved for local groups, or access may have required negotiation - the barrows placed at these points signifying the transition from communal to non-communal land. The small clusters of round barrows, their wide dispersion as well as varying morphologies along this route may reflect the different structural traditions or preferences of the kin groups that had access to the hill.

Transit across the plateau would presumably not be restricted to the movement of animals, but also other desirable goods, perishable and otherwise, which would likely include the products from the picrite source at Hyssington, ten kilometres to the west. The proliferation of barrows on the Long Mynd may thus represent a high level of access by a number of population groups and the proximity of Hyssington may have been a contributing factor.

The prevalence of round barrows on the Long Mynd is unlikely to be solely a product of differential preservation. There is an almost complete absence of barrows to the hills to the east, the one exception being a small barrow (PRN227) below the main ridge of Caer Caradoc. Although much of these hills constitute improved grasslands for grazing in contrast to the common land of the Long Mynd, this does not account for the lack of barrows, as evidenced by their survival on similarly utilised terrain to the immediate west. The Long Mynd was purposefully selected as an appropriate place for so many barrows whilst the hills directly to the east were avoided. It is perhaps easier to explain reasons for siting barrows than to explain their absence and this may be the result of a number of factors. The steep sided, whaleback ridges are not particularly conducive to transport or settlement, but perhaps more significant is the presence of the Stretton Gap - the dale that divides the Long Mynd from the eastern hills- a significant topographical feature. In places up to a kilometre in width, it constitutes a significant division between the two uplands and may have acted as a territorial division, perhaps separating those communities that practised barrow construction in high places from those that did not. Alternately the division may have been based upon other principles – it may have been taboo to build there or the nature of activities practiced upon such distinctive hills did not necessitate barrow construction.



Figure 81: The view east to the Clee Hills from barrow 261

It is notable that the further east one travels, the fewer the barrows are to be found in the high places. The Malvern Hills for example, located on the Herefordshire - Worcestershire border, is comparable to the Long Mynd in length yet possesses only two barrows - a closely spaced pair atop Pinnacle Hill. There is a possibility that a cairn originally covered a cremation found under a miniature urn on the summit of Worcestershire Beacon (Allies 1852, 165-6) but this is difficult to verify. Similarly, the high ground of Wenlock Edge, a 30km escarpment - just 6km to the east at its closest point to the Long Mynd- has no recorded extant barrows although there is some evidence for activity away from the high ground. Cropmarks of three ring ditches have been found on the lower, south-eastern facing slopes and Hartshorne (1841, 84) recounts the digging of a small, low mound from which a dark deposit was identified and the discovery nearby of what appears to be an inverted Collared Urn that contained cremated remains, but that is the extent of the material from this entire ridge.

Whilst it is inevitable that some barrows may have been destroyed without record, it is perhaps likely that there is a real difference in barrow placement and that preferences and practices were different to the east of the Stretton Gap.

4.8 Cluster E: Banc Gorddwr, Powys

The Banc Gorddwr cluster, represented by 10 records of round barrows on the CPAT database, was selected for study as it is situated within a wider area unusually dense with barrows (Fig 82). Across the Ithon Valley to the north-west are the barrow cemeteries of Glog Hill, and to the north east lie the Kerry Two Tumps, close to the western terminus of the Kerry Ridgeway. Two Cross Dykes, at Glog Hill and Kerry Hill, were constructed within metres of round barrows. Furthermore, the cluster terminates at an area of topographic interest, that of the rising of three major rivers. A degree of pragmatism also prevailed as access to all of the round barrows on Glog Hill could not be gained and the cluster chosen provided little impediment to fieldwork.

Signs of disturbance at two of the barrows (1909; 1913) indicate investigation or robbing in the past but there are no records of any excavations. However, the nearby barrows of the Kerry Two Tumps (Wright 1913; Daniel *et al* 1927) and Gwernesob Barrow (Jerman 1932; 1933) were subject to excavation in the early twentieth century.

There is no evidence for earlier activity in the immediate vicinity of the barrows but this may be illusory due to historical land-use regimes. The cluster lies mainly within an area of upland common land, but a discrete group of flint scatters of probable Neolithic date were found on, and around, a small hillock to the north of the cluster at Cider House. Similarly, fieldwalking on Glog Hill has resulted in finds including a petit-tranchet derivative arrowhead, calcined flints, blades, cores, flakes, utilised flakes, scrapers and a knife (data from CPAT HER). To the north-west a microlith was found incorporated within the mound material of the western barrow of the Kerry Two Tumps (Daniel *et al* 1927, 155).

4.8.1 Topography

The cluster is located on a north-south trending watershed that broadens at Banc Gorddwr, its highest point at 489m OD. Just over 1km to the north, a col divides Glog Hill from the Kerry Ridgeway and from here two significant rivers, the Ithon and the Mule rise, whilst the Teme rises about 1.5km to the north-east. The ridge feeds the Teme to the east and the Ithon to the west. From many points on the ridge there are

expansive and wide views which include the long, un-named ridge to the west that has Crugyn-llwyd as its highest point, the Kerry Ridgeway and Cilfaesty Hill to the north, and Glog Hill to the north-west. To the east, the Teme valley leads to Clun Forest, whilst views to the south include Warren Hill, Beacon Hill, and beyond this, the hills of Radnor Forest, all of which have barrows upon them. The central section of the ridge is largely treeless and consists of open grassland and moorland, with enclosed pastureland located at the northern and southern edges.

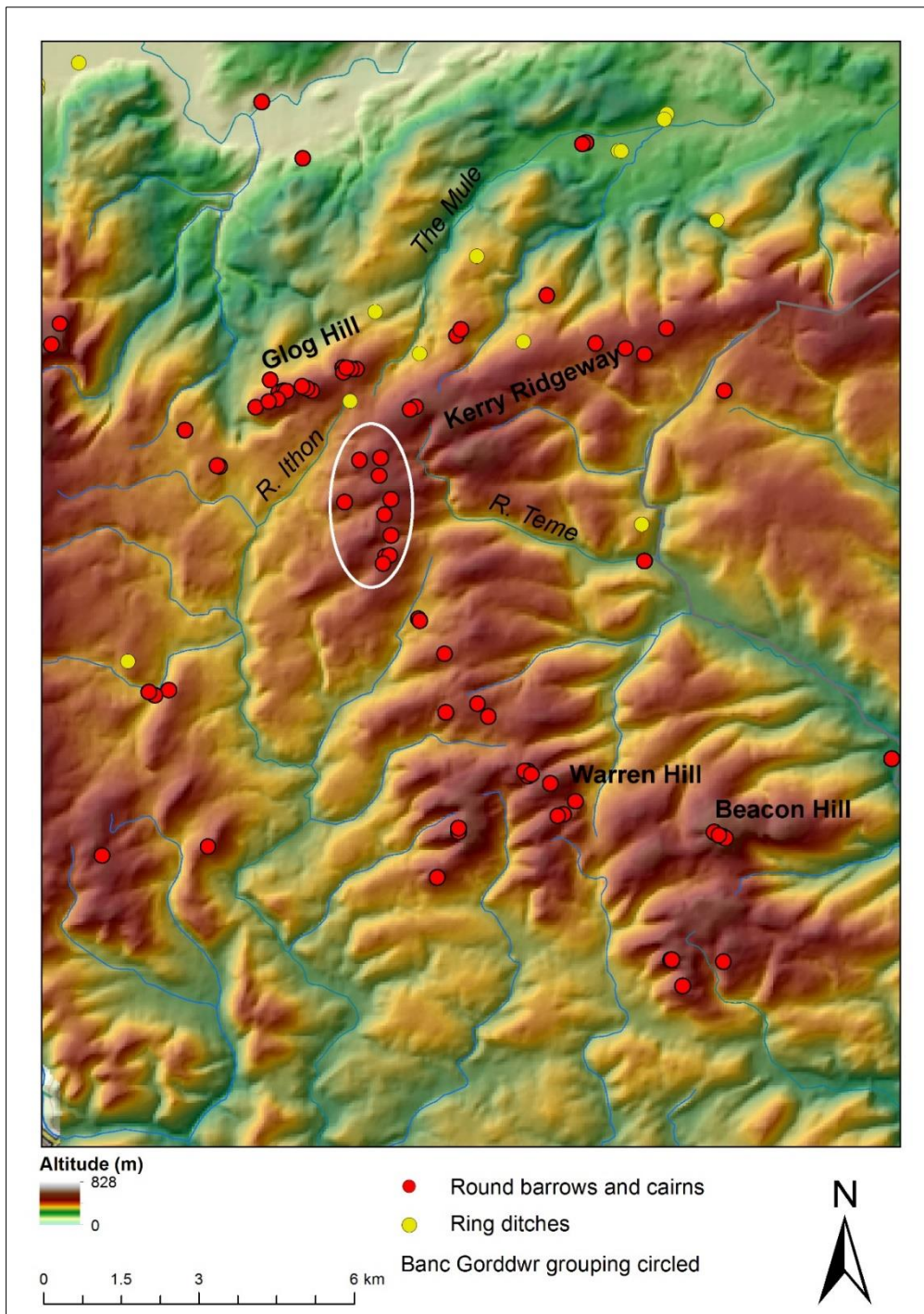


Figure 82: location of the Banc Gorddwr cluster

4.8.2 Description of the cluster

The cluster comprises a broadly linear arrangement of 10 sites that stretches for approximately 2km along a north-south axis (Table 16, Fig 83). With the exception of three barrows at the southern end of the cluster (1908, 1909, 1913), the sites are located individually, spaced at intervals of 300m-500m. Due to the lack of excavation there is some uncertainty expressed by fieldworkers as to the confidence in the attribution of all of these sites as being barrows. In part this may be due to morphological differences; two barrows have more traditional rounded profiles (1916, 5743) whilst the majority of the others are flattened to greater or lesser degrees. No stone was visible at any sites suggesting that they are of earthen construction, at least with regards to the final barrow covering.

The Crugynau (1916), a large prominence at the northern end of the cluster may be natural. At a recorded diameter of 50m this would indeed be unusual, but this may be a result of the mound spreading. Crugynau Mound II (5743) is not as well defined as others along the ridge but its position within enclosed agricultural land may account for this. The third problematic mound (5742) lies close to a pool at the southern edge of the common and has been interpreted as a natural undulation of a ridge (CPAT fieldworkers comment) although its hummocky surface suggests that its composition may be different to the surrounding landscape.

Two of the sites (12779, 6477) could not be located by the author. One of these (6477), a small cairn some 2m in diameter, has not been located by fieldworkers on two subsequent occasions since its original discovery in 1980. Another small mound (12779), recently identified on a westward extending ridge from the main watershed, could not be located by the author despite two separate searches. Both of these problems may be due to erroneous grid references but searches by the author in the immediate environs proved fruitless.

Table 16: Banc Gorddwr cluster data

PRN	Name	Diameter (m)	Height (m)	Nearest neighbour (m)
5743	Crugynau Mound II	22	?	351
1916	The Crugynau	50	3	411
1911	Gorddwr Bank Barrow	12	1.2	351
5233	Windy Hall Barrow	21	1	323
5742	Upper Teme Farm mound	27	1.5	393
1908	Rhiw Porthnant Barrow I	16	1.6	84
1909	Rhiw Porthnant Barrow II	17	1.1	84
1913	Dicky's Stool Barrow	22	1	144
Unlocated barrows				
6477	Gorddwr Bank Cairn	2	1.2	323
12779	Y Foel Mound	4	0.3	818

PRN 5743 – Crugynau Mound II

This mound has some doubt attached to its provenance, probably due in part to its dissimilarity to the barrows further south within the cluster. The smoothed appearance of the mound in comparison to the others could be attributed to mound spreading due to agricultural practices. However, its position just below a local high point and proximity to the rising of a feeder stream to the Teme are factors that strengthen the interpretation. Views are largely restricted by the nearby higher ground of Crugynnau to the west, the Kerry Ridgeway to the north and Banc Gorddwr to the south. The only barrow intervisible in the cluster is 1911, although the Kerry Two Tumps are skylined on the Ridgeway.

PRN 1916 – Crugynau Barrow

This distinctive large mound, sited on a westward trending ridge, could well be a natural feature as suggested by CPAT. It's seemingly anomalous large diameter is indeed troubling; mounds of such sizes are rare, but not unknown and most are untested by excavation. The visual trend for this mound is to the west and it is intervisible with 1911.

PRN 1911 – Gorddwr Bank barrow

This flat topped barrow is situated on level ground at the point where the slope breaks to the west. Long views are found in an arc from the north to the south-south-east. The near views are dominated by the Kerry Ridgeway and its Tumps, Bryn Coch and Cifaesty Hill to the north-east and the rise of Banc Gorddwr to the south. Although a

modern tree plantation blocks visibility to the north –east it is apparent that the Crugynnau mound would be intervisible.

PRN 5233 – Windy Hill barrow

Although this flattened mound is sited on and augments a local summit, it does not command 360° views; these are restricted northwards by Banc Gorddwr and minimally to the south-west by a higher local summit although views into the valleys of the Teme and the Ithon are available. Intervisibility within the cluster is restricted to the southern barrows, although only the location, not the actual mound of 5742 could be discerned due to its low size, vegetation cover and the oblique angle of view from higher ground. The hills to the south now take on a prominence as the barrows of Warren Hill and Gors Lyden appear on the skyline.

PRN5742 – Upper Teme Farm mound

A slight hummocky mound next to a pool identified by Bird in 1977 has been disputed by CPAT as a natural undulation. As with many mounds such as these, from some angles the case is more convincing than others. Two of the barrows on Rhiw Porthnant (1908, 1909) are skylined from this location.

PRN 1908 - Rhiw Porthnant barrow I; PRN 1909 - Rhiw Porthnant barrow II;

PRN 1913 – Dicky's Stool barrow

The Rhiw Porthnant barrows will be considered here as a group to avoid repetition. The three barrows are sited on a local summit at the south end of the cluster. Barrows I and II were constructed on subtle local rises on the larger, rather flat main summit (Fig 84). They trend towards the north of this eminence allowing them to overlook a feeder valley of the Teme and appearing as skylined features when approaching from the north. There appear to be morphological differences between the three barrows; Barrow I (1908) is the smallest and more rounded of the three, whilst its pair (1909) is flatter in profile though this may be due in part to an unrecorded excavation, apparent from a 3m diameter depression in the centre of the barrow. Dicky's Stool Barrow (1913), the largest of the three, is set slightly apart from the other two on the highest part of the summit and has a much more defined flattened profile, interpreted by CPAT as a platform barrow. When looking northwards the common obscures long range views but wide ranging vistas stretch out to all other cardinal points. Glog Hill and the Kerry Ridgeway no longer dominate but impressive single and paired barrows are visible to the south on the skylines of Warren Hill and Gors Lydan respectively.

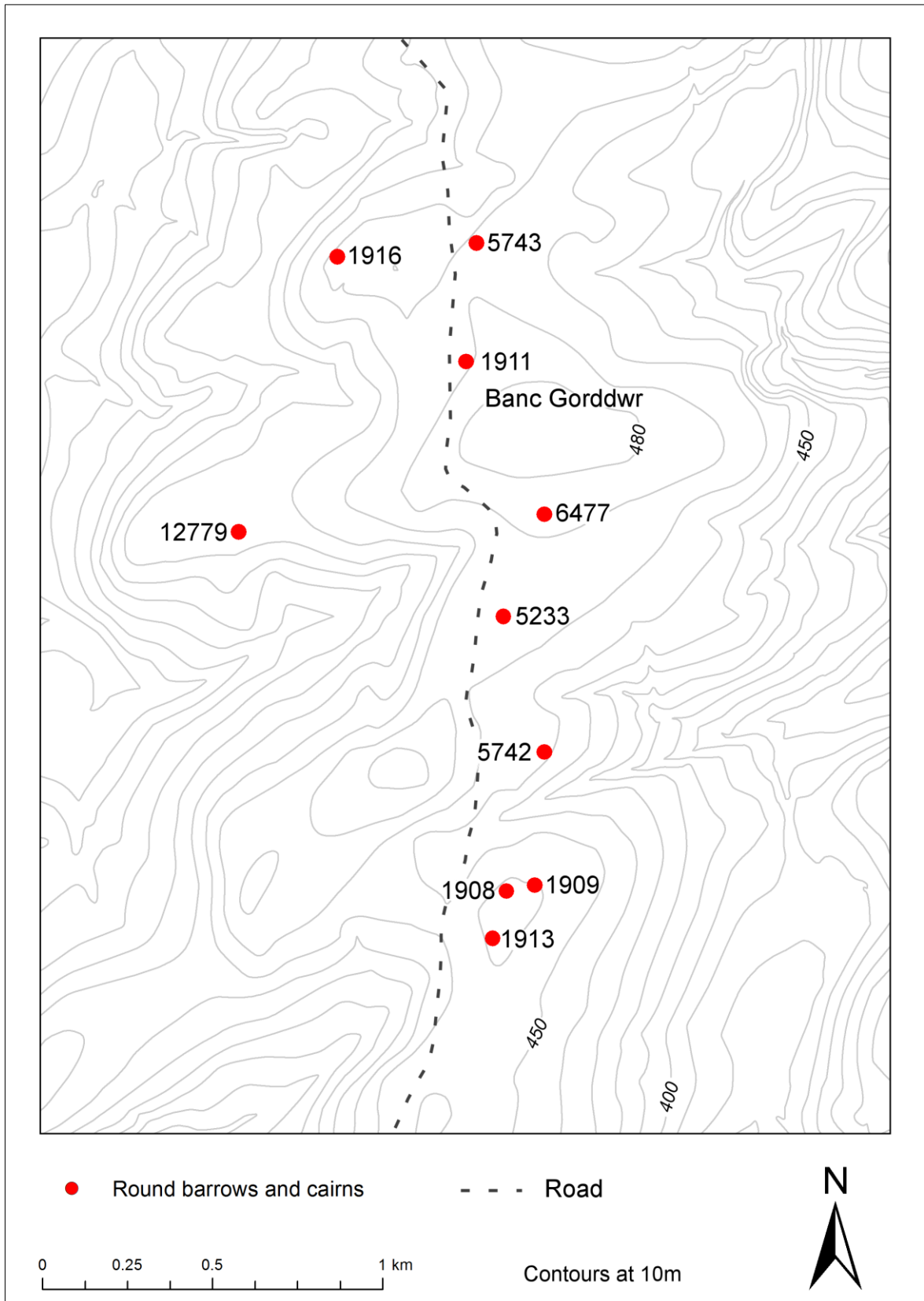


Figure 83: location of sites at Banc Gorddwr



Figure 84: Rhiw Porthnant barrows 1908 and 1909. Taken from Dicky's Stool (1913) looking north-east. Cilfaesty Hill is to the right and the Kerry Ridgeway is to the left.

4.8.3 Cluster cohesion

The evidence for cohesion at Banc Gorddwr is not as straightforward as some other sites. Whilst instantly recognisable in plan view as a cluster, this is less obvious on the ground. The integrity of the cluster thus depends on its topographic isolation from adjacent landforms and barrows but the cluster may in fact be part of a larger network of related barrows (see below). The cluster can be regarded as a dispersed linear arrangement of individual sites with a nucleated element at its southern end. Here, a grouping of three barrows provided a focal point of some significance. The barrows of this grouping are situated on a summit that directly overlooks the rising of three streams, tributaries of the Ithon and Teme rivers. It is of note that Dicky's Stool (1913) is set slightly away from the other two barrows of this grouping and differs morphologically. In addition, it is the most southerly monument of the cluster. This morphological difference may indicate that this flat topped barrow was utilised in a manner different to that of the others, perhaps relating to movement along the ridge.

4.8.4 Visual relationships

The barrows are sited on an undulating ridge which permits reciprocal visual relationships from some locations yet obstructs at others (barrows 6477 and 12779 are excluded from this analysis as they could not be located) (Table 17, Fig 85)

There is a distinct visual separation between the barrows north and south of Banc Gorddwr. The five barrows to the south share a cohesive visual relationship with each other and the barrows at either end of this smaller grouping form skyline features when viewed from either direction. The three barrows to the north of Banc Gorddwr are not fully intervisible with each other, but this may not be problematic if the Crugynnau is indeed a natural rather than anthropogenic feature. In addition the long visual cues are to different topographic settings. The northern grouping is intervisible with Glog Hill and the Kerry Ridgeway and their associated barrows are readily identifiable. To the south it is the prominent ridge that includes Warren Hill and Gors Lydan, again with their distinctive skylined barrows, that draws the eye.

Throughout the cluster there are restrictions to greater or lesser extents on northern vistas. From the southern barrows this is especially marked, views are restricted to Banc Gorddwr itself whilst long views of the northern grouping are restricted by the Kerry Ridgeway and Glog Hill.

Table 17: intervisibility at Banc Gorddwr cluster

	Barrows visible							
	5743	1916	1911	5233	5742	1908	1909	1913
5743			x					
1916			x					
1911	x	x						
5233					o	x	x	x
5742				x		x	x	
1908				x	x		x	x
1909				x	x	x		x
1913				x		x	x	

X=barrow is visible O= location is visible but the barrow cannot be distinguished

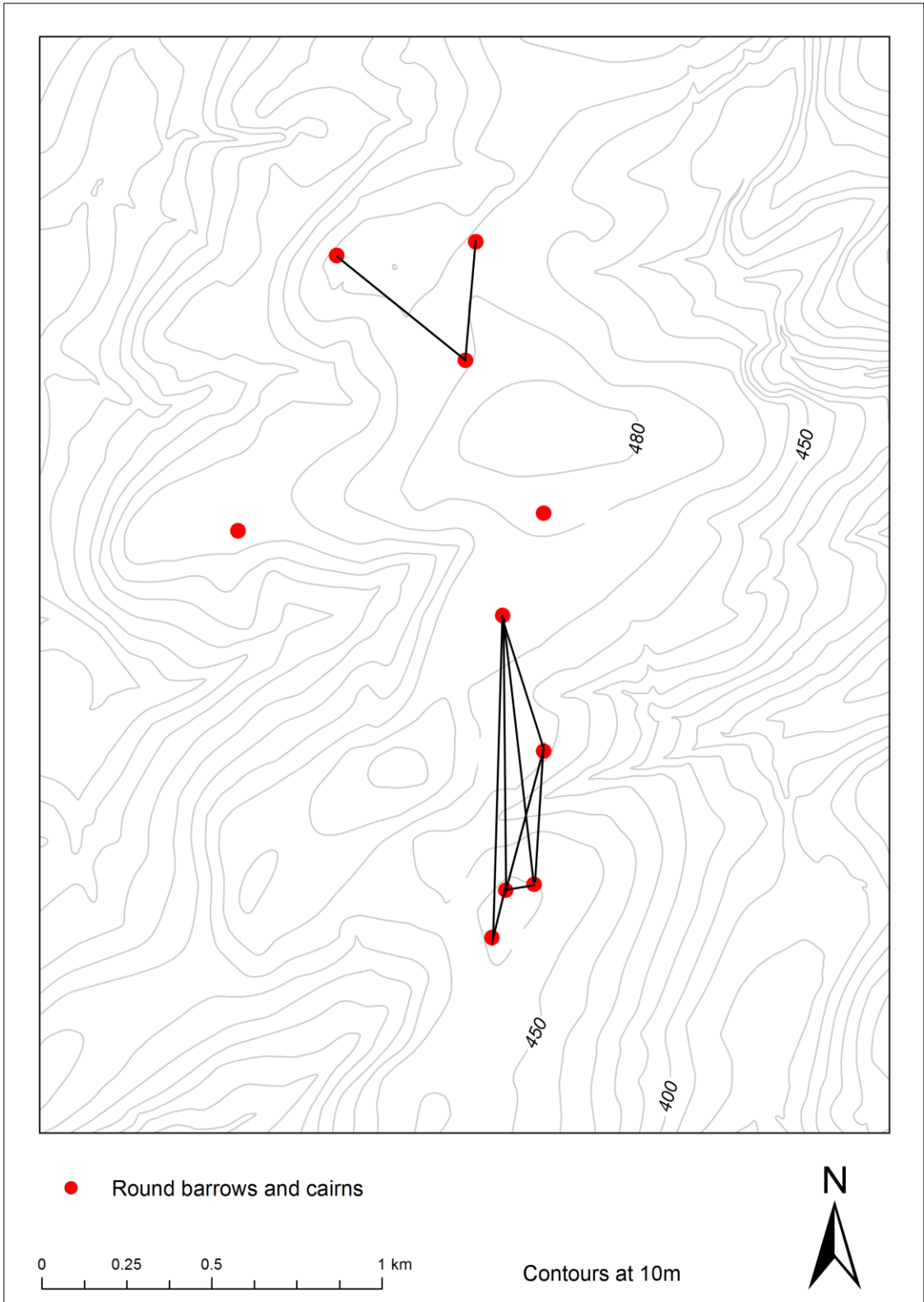


Figure 85: intervisibility at Banc Gorrddwr cluster

4.8.5 Topographic relationships

Of principal interest is the avoidance of the highest points in the immediate landscape of the cluster - Banc Gorddw and an unnamed summit to the west of the Upper Teme Farm mound (5742). Not all summits will have been considered appropriate places to build barrows for a variety of reasons, but it is also of interest that the high ground to the east, Cilfaesty Hill, appears to have been avoided. That this area is similar in terms of land use, being unenclosed common land, suggests that the avoidance is real rather than the absence of barrows being a result of erosive and destructive processes. It would seem that it was the long broad ridge that was desirable in this case, the significance of which will be discussed below.

4.8.6 The cluster and its place within the landscape

The spatial organisation of the cluster in the landscape is perhaps not immediately obvious without recourse to plan view but considered in its wider context the structuring is more apparent. Visible on the near skyline to the north-east is the pair of barrows known as the Kerry Two Tumps (Fig 86). To the north-west Glog Hill rises, crowned with a dense cluster of barrows. To the south-east, a line of barrows broadly follows a track that leads eventually to the cluster of barrows in the environs of Warren Hill.



Figure 86: The Kerry Two Tumps photographed from Gorddwr Bank Barrow (1911)

The barrows in the cluster are not intended to be viewed from lower slopes and valleys but are sited on, or near, the high points, rendering them most visible from other high points in the landscape. It has been suggested that their situation, demarcating watersheds may have held a territorial significance, perhaps denoting the boundaries of adjacent land ownerships (Gibson 2002, 23). Whilst plausible, there may be another explanation. The wider network of barrows has, at its centre, the col from which the Ithon and Mule rivers rise at Black Gate, a feature of some historic significance with regard to routeways through the uplands. There is considerable difficulty in negotiating medium and long distance journeys through Wales and the borderlands, and attempting direct routes which cut across the 'grain' of the country, as most east-west journeys do, one invariably encounters a series of alternating steep ascents and descents. The alternatives are valley or upland routes, and a network of historic hilltop routeways, long used as droveways, has been identified in the environs of Kerry (Jerman 1934). The Black Gate col occupied a nodal position as the only location in east-central Wales where an upland, east-west route could be negotiated without crossing a north-south running river valley (ibid. 15). The distribution of artefacts and round barrows led Jerman to postulate that these historic routeways may have had their origins in the Bronze Age (ibid. 22-5). Of interest is that Jerman recognised the possibility of their antiquity with less evidence than is currently available; since the publication of his paper, a range of new discoveries, both of artefacts and barrows, especially along the southern route mentioned below, serves to reinforce the possibility of his hypothesis.

Three routeways converge at the Black Gate col. The Kerry Ridgeway, or Yr Hên Ffordd (The Old Road), extends 22km eastwards from Cider House to Bishop's Castle in Shropshire. As this ridgeway rises from its junction with the north-south trackway connecting Banc Gorddwr with Glog Hill, it is marked at its highest point by the Kerry Two Tumps. These barrows are located at a point of topographic change, in this case where the ridge begins to descend to the col. North-east from the col a trackway ascends the eastern summit of Glog Hill, and the transition from the col to the high ground is marked by a grouping of five barrows through which the trackway passes. Jerman traces the historic trackway north-eastwards to Dolfor and beyond, but maintaining the ridge WSW leads to the other barrow groupings of Glog Hill. These barrows differ in their siting in that they occupy the local summits of the ridge, following the perhaps more familiar pattern of barrows on summits.

At the southern end of the Banc Gorddwr cluster, the grouping of three barrows marks not only the “beginning” of the cluster under consideration, but also another point of topographic transition, the descent towards a dispersed linear arrangement of barrows. This line of barrows, most of which were unidentified in the 1930’s, is closely shadowed by the northern extent of another trackway. Named as *Way No.2* by Jerman (1934, fig.2), this trackway follows the high ground of the watershed between the Teme valley and the Lugg and Ithon valleys, and is today marked in part by Glyndŵr’s Way, a long distance footpath. In a manner similar to that of the Banc Gorddwr cluster, the barrows along this route, spaced at intervals of between 300-1000m, avoid the local summits. Interspersed along this route have been found a number of flint scatters (Jeffery 1963). A significant topographic change along the trackway, the col between Gors Lydan and Warren Hill, is also marked by a small grouping of barrows. This may herald a divergence of pathways, with one trackway leading southwest past Gors Lydan and Moelfre Hill and the other south-east, below Warren Hill and on to Beacon Hill in the east.

It is reasonable then to suggest that the barrows may have been sited alongside a routeway, most likely in existence prior to barrow construction. The dense clusters to the north and south of Banc Gorddwr perhaps represent nodal points along the paths. That these locations attracted significant numbers of barrows is perhaps not surprising. The divergence or convergence of routes to the north and south of the cluster may have held a certain significance to travellers, in this case necessitating the construction of round barrows, and would be easily identifiable and known to knowledgeable travellers.

It is unfortunate that no records survive of the probable excavations of some of the Banc Gorddwr barrows. However it is worth briefly examining the excavation record of the barrows known as the Two Tumps on the Kerry Ridgeway, a short distance away. A small trench placed through the centre of the smaller, eastern mound (PRN 1000) in 1912 revealed a barrow constructed of layers of clay and stone and what appears to have been a prepared stone base or floor. A Food Vessel containing “ash” was deposited in a rock cut pit, capped with a small dome of clay (Wright 1913). The larger, western barrow, excavated in 1926 (Daniel *et al* 1927) was similarly constructed of “variegated clays, loams and rubble “and contained three cremation burials and an inhumation, all from within the mound itself with no associated pottery.

The inhumed bones were found in a much decomposed state and decayed wood fragments found around and underneath the bones may indicate a coffin. At least one of the cremation burials can be considered a “token” burial in that it appears only the skull was deposited. Contained within the mound material were found various flint artefacts including microliths, a barbed and tanged arrowhead and scrapers. Of interest is the formation of the barrow mounds of material not found in the immediate vicinity, with Daniel et al. (1927, 152) suggesting possible sources in the neighbouring valleys. The inclusion of numerous quartz pebbles is suggestive of links with other places and perhaps a desire to incorporate foreign, or non-local, material into the barrow. Further evidence of this variety can be seen at the nearby Gwernescob Barrow I (PRN999), located to the north-east on a spur off the Ridgeway. Here a stake circle enclosed four un-urned cremation burials; the only pottery recovered was a fragmented Collared Urn deposited in a linear feature radiating from the centre of the barrow above and slightly east of a primary cremation burial (Jerman 1932; 1933).

Although none of the barrows were fully excavated, it is clear there are significant differences between them. These may reflect changing traditions over time, or a desire to achieve different outcomes resulting from the practices enacted there. Equally they may reflect the differing constructional and ceremonial practices of people from different areas which may explain the inclusion of non-local materials such as quartz. If this is the case it is perhaps useful to consider clusters such as Banc Gorddwr as part of a network of interrelated communities connected by the movement of people and animals along well established routeways.

4.9 Cluster F: Radnor Forest, Powys

The Radnor Forest cluster was investigated to examine the siting and relationship of the round barrows to the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monumental complex of Walton Basin (Fig 87). Although this important landscape has been subject to detailed research in recent years, summarised by Britnell (2013) and Jones (2013) the outlying barrows, as detailed here, have received less attention.

Previous fieldwork has been fruitful in identifying and cataloguing greater numbers of barrows, earthworks and artefacts in the area (RCAHMW 1913; Owen 1992; Jones 2004; Hall & Sambrook 2008) but there have been no modern recorded excavations of the barrows.

Evidence of early, or possibly contemporaneous activity in the immediate area is limited and ambiguous. Two hut platforms and enclosures reported to have been located on Great Rhos have not been authenticated (information from CPAT HER) and could not be located during the fieldwork. Similarly, a complex of earthwork banks was recently discovered but their date and function remain unknown (Hall & Sambrook 2008, 19). The almost complete lack of artefactual evidence – a small flint blade fragment was found on the surface of Bache Hill III - is perhaps unsurprising given the nature of the land usage. Rather, this category of evidence, primarily consisting of lithic scatters, is to be found recorded on the lower slopes and surrounding terrain including a bronze flat axe found at the base of the Whimble (Noble 1957, 65).

4.9.1 Topography

Radnor Forest is a large, flat-topped, upland block that covers some 82km² to the west of the modern Anglo-Welsh border and lying to the north of New Radnor. Rising to a height of 660m, it is cut by numerous steep-sided valleys, the most impressive of these being the Harley Dingle which runs south from the heights of the plateau for 5km and bisects the southern reaches of the Forest into eastern and western halves. Erosional features, with the local name of *riggles*, cut perpendicular to the contours of many of the valleys. To the north, the river Lugg descends from its source close to Beacon Hill. To the south, the Summergill Brook winds its way eastward along the southern flanks of the Forest into the heart of the Walton Basin. The south eastern

hills of the forest form part of the ring of upland that overlooks the Walton Basin. A large expanse of the Forest is rough hill pasture, with much still registered as common land, and is covered by a moorland vegetation of heather, bilberry and natural grass species with some peat deposits on the plateau. A large forestry plantation covers much of the northern and eastern spurs of the Forest.

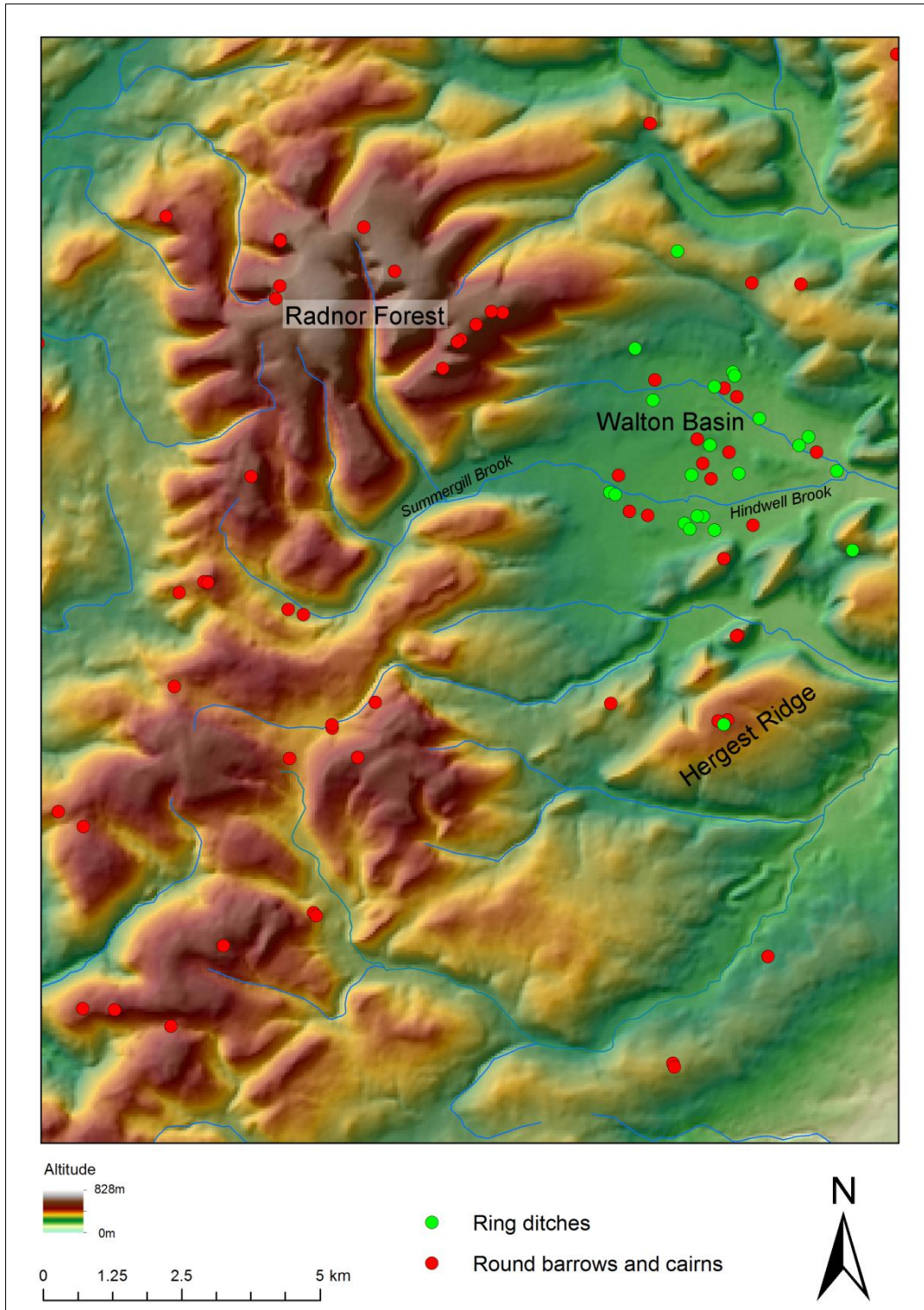


Figure 87: location of the Walton Basin cluster

4.9.2 Description of the Cluster

The cluster, as recorded on the HER, comprises twelve sites of which one, Great Rhos I, appears to be a mis-location according to the HER record and could not be found during the fieldwork for this study (Table 18, Fig 90). The size of the barrows fits comfortably within the range for the study area in general, with diameters ranging from 11-23m. The barrows to the west are smaller than almost all of the other barrows; the largest diameter barrows are to be found on Black Mixen, but the highest, and visually most impressive, is on Bache Hill, overlooking Walton Basin. The cluster is dispersed around the fringe of the plateau with the exception of Black Mixen II which is located on the highest point of Black Mixen. A close set pair of barrows occurs to the north-west at Cwm Bwch and the barrows on Whinyard Rocks may also be deemed a pair, albeit more widely spaced.

Table 18:Radnor Forest cluster data

PRN	Name	Diameter (m)	Height (m)	Nearest neighbour (m)
994	Cwm Bwch I	11	1.5	30
995	Cwm Bwch II	14	1.5	30
1637	Black Mixen I	23	1.6	976
1641	Black Mixen II	22	1.5	976
1642	Cwm Bwch III	14	1.3	240
1991	Bache Hill I	21	2.7	200
1992	Bache Hill II	15	1.3	200
1994	Whinyard Rocks I	18	1.8	72
1995	Whinyard Rocks II	12	1.2	72
1996	Whimble	19	2.0	545
2184	Bache Hill Barrow III	13	0.6	368
26296	Great Rhos I	-	-	-

PRN 994 / PRN 995

These two barrows are located where the terrain levels out, a few metres to the east of an extremely steep and dramatic slope on a north-west trending spur. The larger of the barrows (995) is closest to the valley with the smaller located a few metres to the northwest. Both have some slight disturbance but appear to be intact. There are some similarities between this pair of barrows and their neighbour to the south (1642). They are all located at the edge of a ravine, and cannot be seen from downslope until the last few metres of approach. From upslope they appear to be on the edge of the near horizon where the hillside falls away. The views outward are similar in most respects to PRN1642 although the northern vista is more extensive and arcs around a little more to the northwest.

PRN 1637

In profile this large, flat-topped barrow is asymmetric, with denudation of the interior and the western hemisphere. It is located on a gentle slope where the terrain flattens, before dropping away steeply to the north but it is not in a false crested position. The ridge of Great Rhos dominates the western aspect and a conifer plantation obscures views northwards, although it may be surmised that such views would be similar to that of Black Mixen II. Long views to the south and Black Mixen II are hidden by the rising plateau.

PRN 1641

This large, flat-topped, barrow has a number of hollows within the centre which has exposed peat (Fig 88). It is located on a broad, relatively flat summit but this is not the highest point of the plateau, which is located c.760m to the south. Rather it would seem that the imperative for this siting was to be central to the eastern plateau. Long views to the west are absent, obscured by Great Rhos. Harley Dingle is visible but its impressive steepness cannot be appreciated from this vantage point. There are excellent views from the north-east to the south east including the distinctive hills of Corndon, Stiperstones, Long Mynd, Caer Caradoc, the Clee Hills, the Pyons, the Woolhope Dome and as far as the Malverns and the Black Mountains. There has been some doubt cast on the veracity of this barrow due to the existence of peat (Hall & Sambrook 2008, 25). Whilst there is a possibility that this earthwork may represent a peat mound, its morphology and location suggests that the peat may cover a monument such as a platform cairn.



Figure 88: Black Mixen II

PRN 1642

This is a relatively well preserved barrow which is bisected by a fence just south of centre. To the south of the fence the barrow appears slightly damaged. It is sited west-north-west of the summit of Great Rhos on the crest of a spur that runs between two steep valleys. The exact siting is on a slight terrace a few metres before the hillside drops away steeply to the west. It is in a false crested position, probably to be viewed from the north-south trending ridge lower to the west. The views are far reaching and extensive in an arc from the north to the south. The mass of Great Rhos rises to the east and dominates that perspective.

PRN1991 1992 2184 (Bache Hill)

The most impressive of the Radnor Forest barrows (1992) is a substantial domed earthwork rising to a height of three metres and surmounted by an OS triangulation pillar (Fig 89). It is sited on a north-east south-west trending ridge overlooking the Walton Basin from which it is visible. The views are extensive from the north to the south-west, but are blocked by the mass of Great Rhos and Black Mixen to the west. It is unusual in that it has a shallow, encircling ditch, a rare feature for upland barrows of this region, and a counterscarp bank was noted by Dunn (1988, 34). Two large depressions are likely to be the result of antiquarian excavations, but in common with

many of these interventions in the study area, there is no record of what was found. A slightly smaller barrow, Bache Hill II (1991), is located two hundred metres downslope to the east and remains undamaged. The siting of this barrow constrains views to the west and south. Lying partway between Bache Hill and Whinyard Rocks on the edge of the ridge lies a much smaller, apparently undisturbed barrow (2184). Although lying in a false-crested position, with views restricted to the south, the slight nature of this barrow would diminish the skyline effect.



Figure 89: PRN 1992

PRN 1994 1995 Whinyard Rocks

These barrows are situated at the south-west extreme of the ridge, carefully sited at the edge of the eminence on a very slight slope, perhaps to accentuate their skyline position from below. The larger of the pair (1994), separated by about 70m, lies to the south-west of its neighbour and both have extensive views over the Walton Basin and to the more distant locations noted for the other ridge barrows. Views eastwards are also available and include landmarks such as Corndon Hill and the Stiperstones.

PRN 1996 Whimble

This large barrow is dramatically sited on the summit of a distinctive, steep-sided hill known as the Whimble. In appearance it is flat-topped with a terrace around its circumference giving the appearance of a basal earthwork surmounted by a smaller addition. The views east and west are long ranging but also include sight of the impressive Harley Dingle as it incises the plateau.

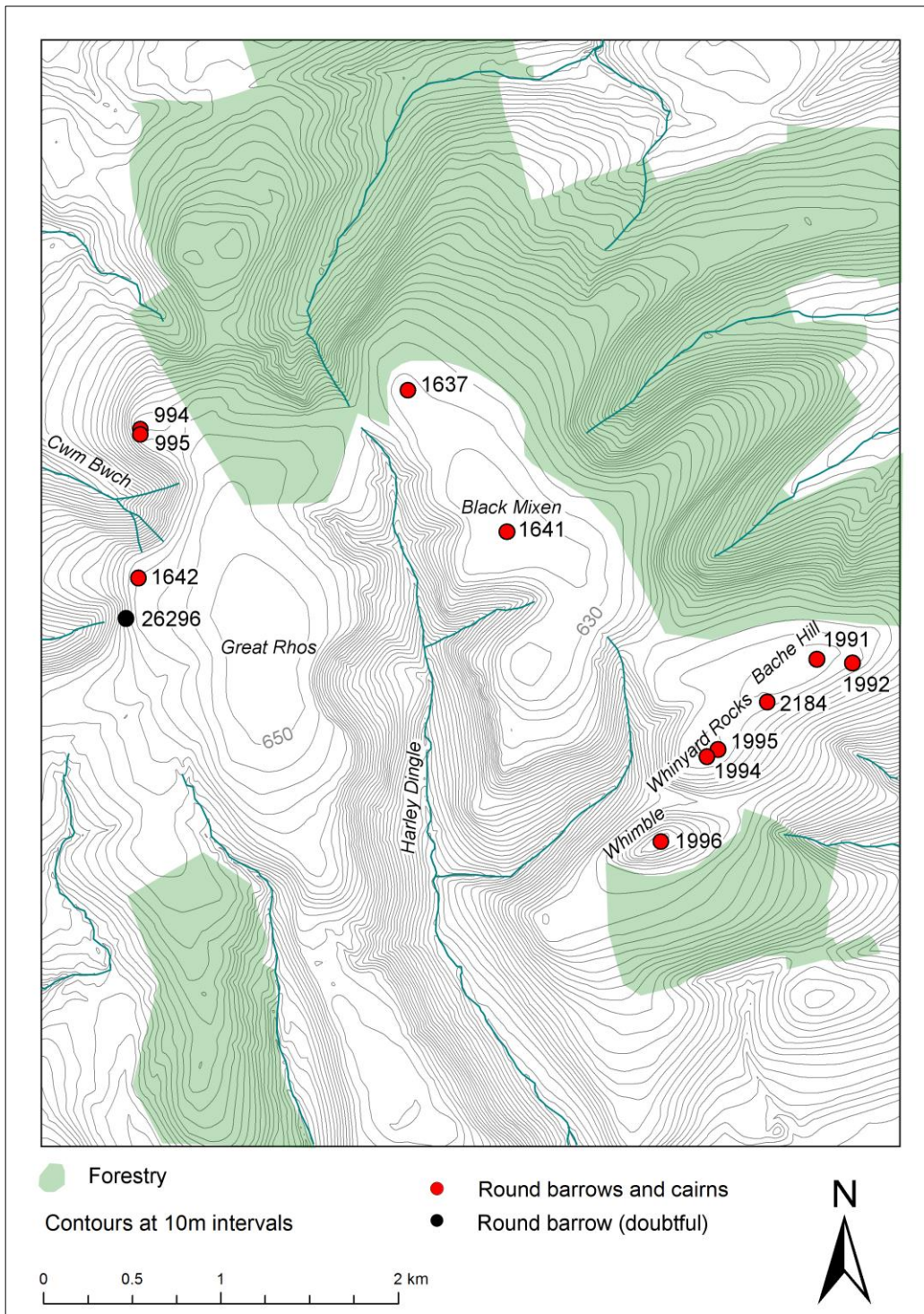


Figure 90: location of sites at Radnor Forest

4.9.3 Cluster cohesion

It is possible to discern two elements to the wider cluster; the ridge barrows to the south-east form a distinct grouping in comparison to the more widely dispersed northern sites. The notion then that this cluster of individual and paired monuments should be considered as a coherent whole is not particularly viable. The barrows are sited such that the principal focus appears to be outwards, towards the wider landscape, and, as will be explained below, there appears to be little concern with maintaining visual links with the other constituent monuments. There is, however, evidence for spatial organisation in that the barrows occupy the periphery of the massif and it is notable that the exception to this, Black Mixen II, appears to be a different type of monument. This may reflect a difference in the nature of the activities enacted at this location, and its central positioning may allude to a role in negotiating use and access to these uplands.

4.9.4 Visual relationships

There appears to be little attempt to maintain visual relationships between the elements of the cluster as a whole (Fig 91, Table 19). In part, this may be a result of the dispersed nature of the cluster and the rather diminutive stature of some of the barrows. Of the northern barrows, only those straddling Cwm Bach are intervisible. By contrast there is a high degree of intervisibility with regard to the barrows on the south-western ridge and on the Whimble. The peripheral location of the barrows, i.e. fringing the plateau, their false crested positions and their lack of intervisibility suggest two possible, and not incompatible, motives for placement– that these monuments were placed to afford views over particular landscapes and to act as highly visible markers from the landscape below. This latter suggestion is certainly tenable for the ridge barrows which are still significant landscape features visible from the Walton Basin.

The only monument visible from the central barrow Black Mixen II is Bache Hill I. It is plausible to suggest that this may not be coincidental. It may well be that this barrow, the largest of the cluster, was constructed in such a manner precisely so that a visual connection was made and thus emphasised and drew attention to that direction. The position of Black Mixen II precludes views to the near valleys, yet the prominence of Bache Hill I is unmistakable from here and would serve as a reminder to people

gathered at this place of the status and significance of what lies over the horizon –
Walton Basin.

Table 19: intervisibility at Radnor Forest cluster

PRN	Sites visible										
	994	995	1637	1641	1642	1991	1992	1994	1995	1996	2184
994		x			x						
995	x				x						
1637											
1641						x					
1642		x									
1991				x			x	x		x	
1992						x		x	x	x	
1994						x	x		x	x	
1995						x	x	x		x	x
1996						x	x	x	x		
2184						x	x		x		

X=site or location is visible

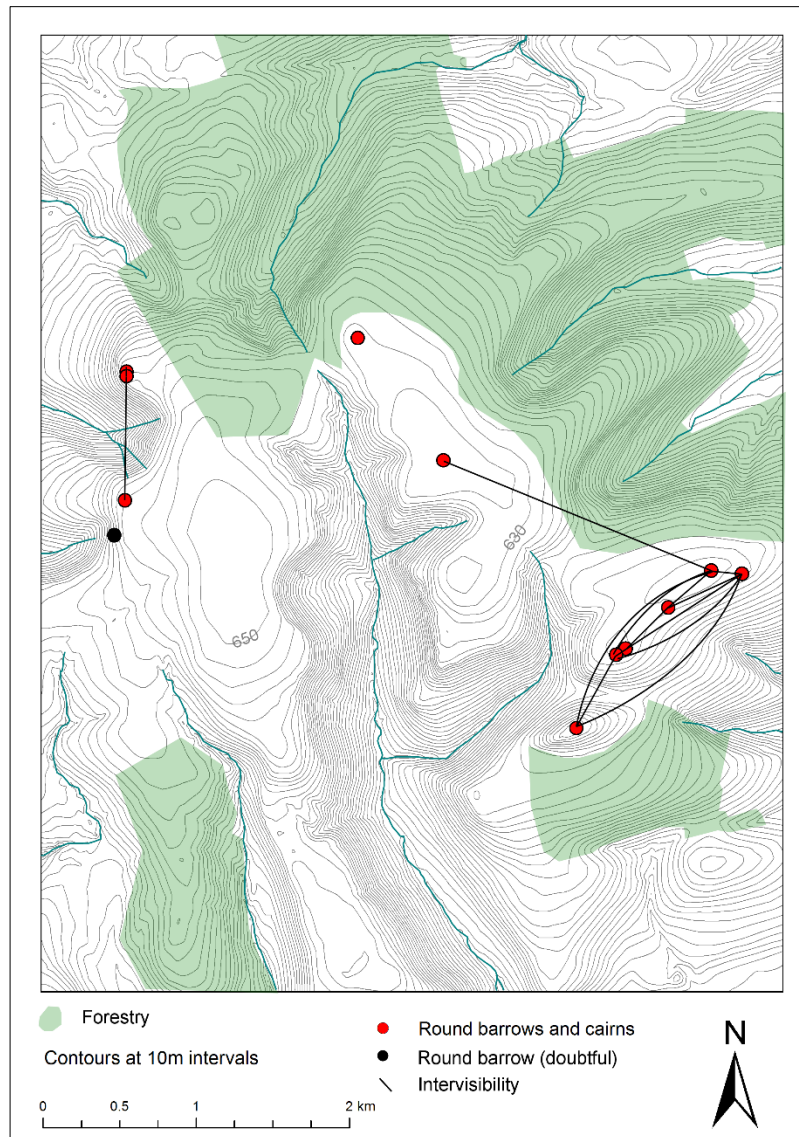


Figure 91: intervisibility at Radnor Forest cluster

4.9.5 Topographic relationships

The barrows are almost entirely located at the outermost fringes of Radnor Forest, perhaps to emphasise their position when viewed from below. There is a further consideration to be noted with regard to the northern barrows in that they occupy positions on the spurs of the massif where the relief changes, phenomena noted at other groupings. It should be noted though that not all of the spurs have barrows associated with them. The precise positioning may thus serve two purposes, enhancing the prominence of the barrows from certain perspectives but also adhering to principles that may govern placement, i.e. prominent breaks of slope.

4.9.6 The cluster and its place within the landscape

The Radnor Forest cluster is perhaps more complex than first appears. There is some patterning to the cluster in that the barrows of outwardly similar morphology inhabit the upper fringes of Radnor Forest. They are, however, widely separated and have little visual connection, yet they are not far enough apart to be entirely unconnected. The outward looking perspective to these barrows suggests a concern with other places, most likely with the lowlands surrounding the hills. It is perhaps no coincidence that the area with the greatest number of monuments, i.e. Walton Basin is overlooked by the south-east ridge which contains the highest concentration of barrows (Fig 92).

Britnell (2013, 43) has noted an absence of monuments between the floor of the Walton Basin and the upland edge and argues that this may represent evidence for transhumance, with families within the basin laying claim to tracts of upland grazing, yet the interior of the forest is largely devoid of barrows,. The structuring of the barrows on the hilltop does seem to suggest a relationship with the valleys below (Figs 92-4), but whether this implies transhumance in the strictest sense of the term is less certain. The barrows are sited to overlook land to the west, north and south-east, all presumably occupied by different groups, yet the available landmass is not particularly extensive. If a visual relationship between the ridge barrows and the Walton Basin may be construed as possible evidence for territorial connections, then it is also feasible that the viewshed highlights those areas which may have some connection to the other barrows within the cluster.

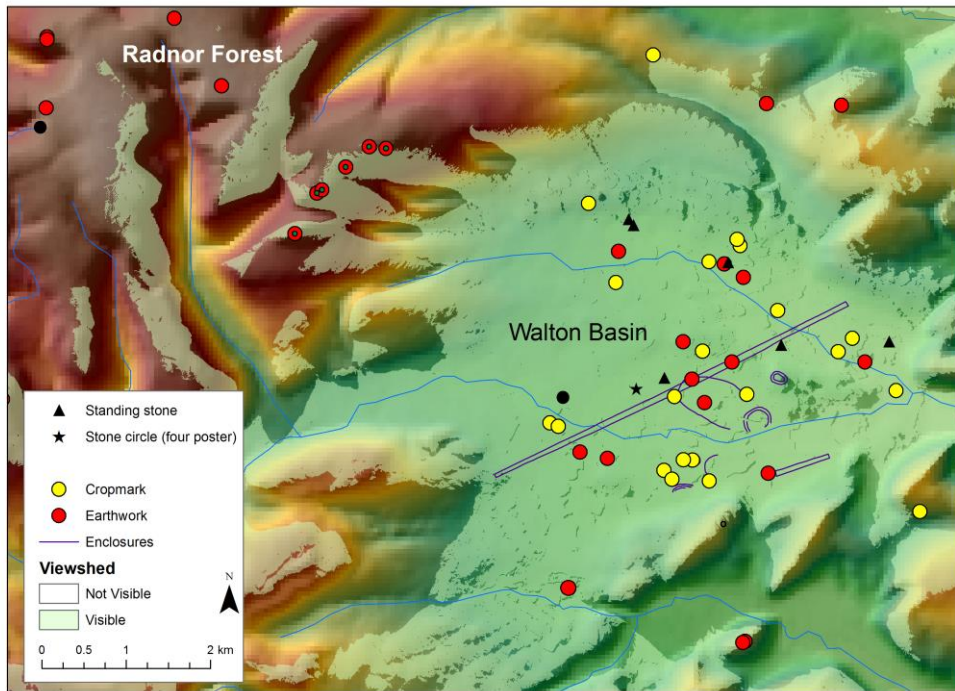


Figure 92: The viewshed illustrates the extent of visibility from the barrows on the south-east ridge of Radnor Forest. This demonstrates the preference for a visual preference towards the Walton Basin. The nature of topography and the position of the ridge barrows precludes views to the interior of the Radnor Forest and thus the other barrows within the cluster.

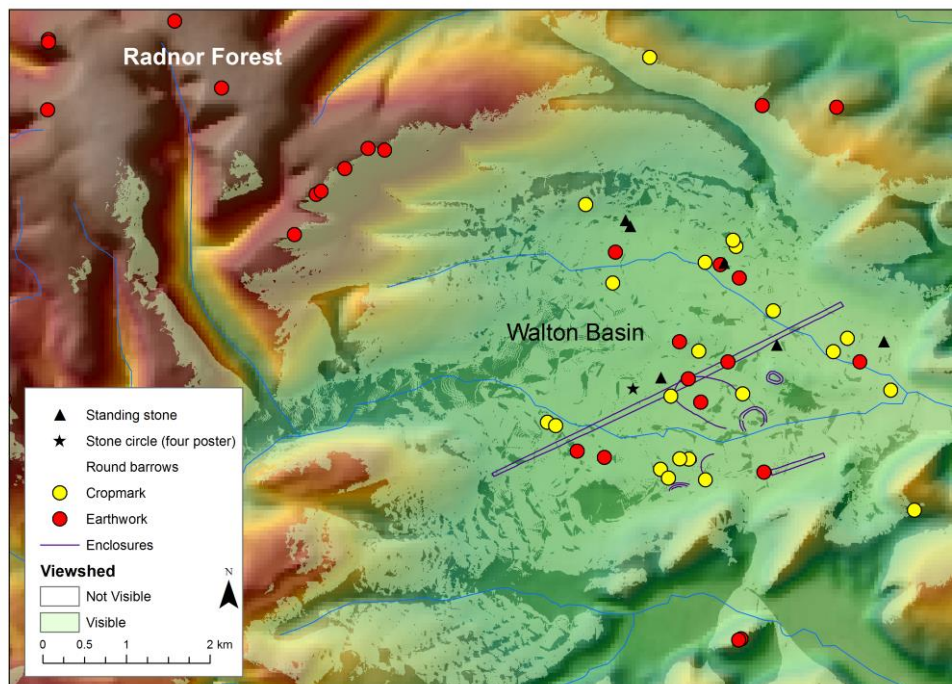


Figure 93: Viewshed from the Walton Basin round barrows and ring ditches. This clearly shows that the round barrows on the ridge at the southwest edge of Radnor Forest are placed at the edge of the visibility threshold for the Walton Basin barrows and ring ditches. Whilst the viewshed combines the views from all of the features within the basin, it does not show individual views from each particular barrow, rather it demonstrates the furthest extent of visibility. The barrows on the ridge appear to be placed at the optimum point on the ridge to enhance visibility from below. As would be expected from the topography, the remaining barrows of the Radnor Forest cluster are not visible from the Walton basin. Observer points were assigned a value of 1.5m.

Following the argument above, it may be that Radnor Forest was utilised by different communities occupying the lowlands and these groups took advantage of the upland grazing opportunities afforded, but perhaps this hill, centrally located, was a neutral or negotiated space in terms of territoriality. The absence, for the most part, of barrows within the interior of the forest, and the preference for siting such monuments at the periphery may reflect the communal access afforded to the different population groups that surrounded this upland. As noted above, Black Mixen II, which appears, at least outwardly, to be of differing morphology, seems to be ideally located to facilitate a space where groups could meet, perhaps to conduct ceremonies which strengthened the bonds of different groups, or where issues such as access were negotiated.

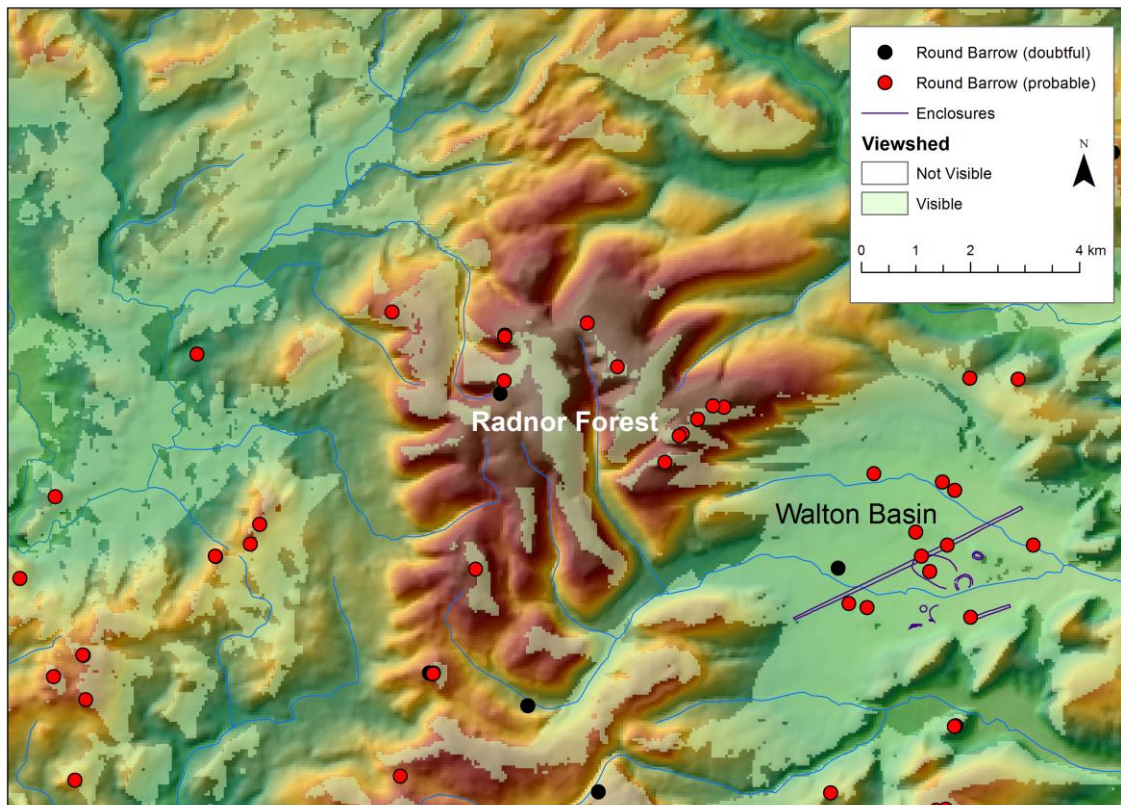


Figure 94: Combined viewshed showing all visible areas from all of the Radnor Forest barrows

The Radnor Forest barrow cluster must be considered within the context of the wider landscape. As such it may be considered as the manifestation of the activities of different population groups rather than the cohesive constructional and ceremonial practices of one group and the distribution of the barrows across a relatively small upland block may perhaps provide a glimpse of social co-operation between such groups.

4.10 Cluster G: Walton Basin, Powys

As one of the few areas in the borderlands with well-attested - albeit no longer extant - earlier monuments, the Walton Basin cluster was chosen primarily to examine the relationship of round barrows to these features. Additionally the lowland location allows comparison with the upland clusters.

Extensive long term research in the area has revealed a complex of monuments and activity - revealed through aerial photography, geophysical survey, field walking and trial excavations - virtually unparalleled in Britain (Figs 95-7; Gibson 1999; Britnell and Jones 2012; Britnell 2013; Jones 2013). These include: a causewayed enclosure; two cursuses, one of which, the Hindwell cursus, is potentially the second or third longest in Britain; two single palisaded enclosures including the Hindwell example - at 34 hectares the largest such site in Britain; a double- palisaded enclosure; a double pit alignment; thirteen extant round barrows and eighteen ring ditches, one of which holds a diameter of just under 100m; six standing stones and a four-poster stone circle. In addition, close to 8,000 flints - mostly Neolithic and Bronze Age - have been recovered (Bradley, 1999; Dunn, 1964, 1965, 1966). Radiocarbon dates obtained from a number of small-scale excavations suggest a continuity of monument building from the beginning of the Neolithic onwards (Table 20).

Table 20: Radiocarbon dates of Walton Basin enclosures (Jones 2010)

Site	Context	Lab No.	C14 Date BP	Cal BC 95%
Hindwell Cursus	Upper ditch fill / deliberate infilling	SUERC-24618	5030±30	3950-3710
	Upper ditch fill / deliberate infilling	SUERC-24834	4900±45	3790-3630
	Lower ditch fill	SUERC-24619	4815±35	3660-3520
Womaston Causewayed enclosure	Basal fill of inner ditch recut	BETA-254592	4800±40	3658-3384
	Lower fill of inner ditch	BETA-254593	4660±40	3625-3360
	Feature cut into upper fill of outer ditch	BETA-254594	4630±40	3621-3342
	Shallow pit within interior	SUERC-26461	2410± 35	750-390
Hindwell Palisaded Enclosure	Charred oak post	SWAN-116	3960±70	2900-2800 or 2700-2200
	Charred oak post	SWAN-117	4070±70	2880-2800 or 2780-2460
	Charred oak post	SWAN-230	4040±80	2900-2350
	Charred oak post	SWAN-231	4130±80	2910-2500
	Combined dates		4045±37	2870-2810 or 2740-2720 or 2700-2470
Walton Court Ring Ditch	Secondary ditch fill	SUERC-26430	3945±35	2570-2300

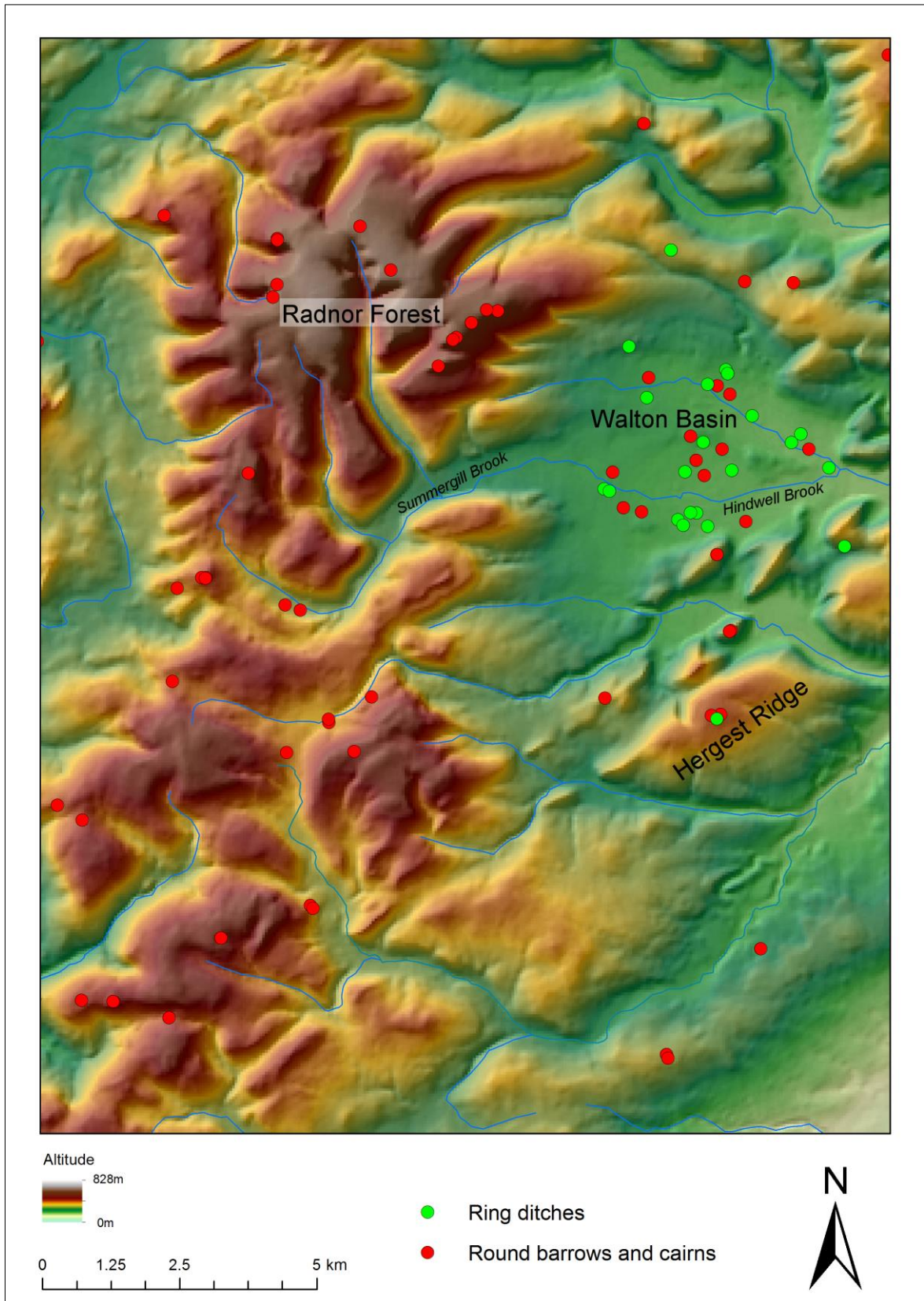


Figure 95: location of the Walton basin cluster

4.10.1 Topography

The Walton Basin, also known as Radnor Valley, is a former bed of a post-glacial lake that lies to the south-east of the county of Powys on the Anglo-Welsh border. Hills, ranging from 300m to over 600m OD, rise up on all sides giving the basin the form of a natural amphitheatre (Fig 96). The floor of the basin lies at an altitude of between about 180m in the east to 230m in the west and is bisected by a broad ridge trending ESE-WNW that rises to a maximum of c. 25m above the surrounding landscape. To the west a pass leads to the Welsh uplands and to the east a narrow gap between the hills links the basin to the lowlands of the English Midlands.

The landscape is drained by the Knobley Brook to the north of the ridge and the Summergil, Hindwell and Riddings brooks to the south and have their confluence at the gap between Burfa Bank and Herrock Hill in the east. The Summergil is fed by streams from the Welsh uplands but dries up in the summer before rising again in a series of springs near Hindwell Pool, the source of the Hindwell Brook. A number of other springs are also present around the margins of the basin.

The present soils of the basin are fertile and well-drained which has resulted in a landscape that is intensively farmed for both arable and pastoral purposes.



Figure 96: The Walton Basin viewed from the east (Photo ©CPAT)

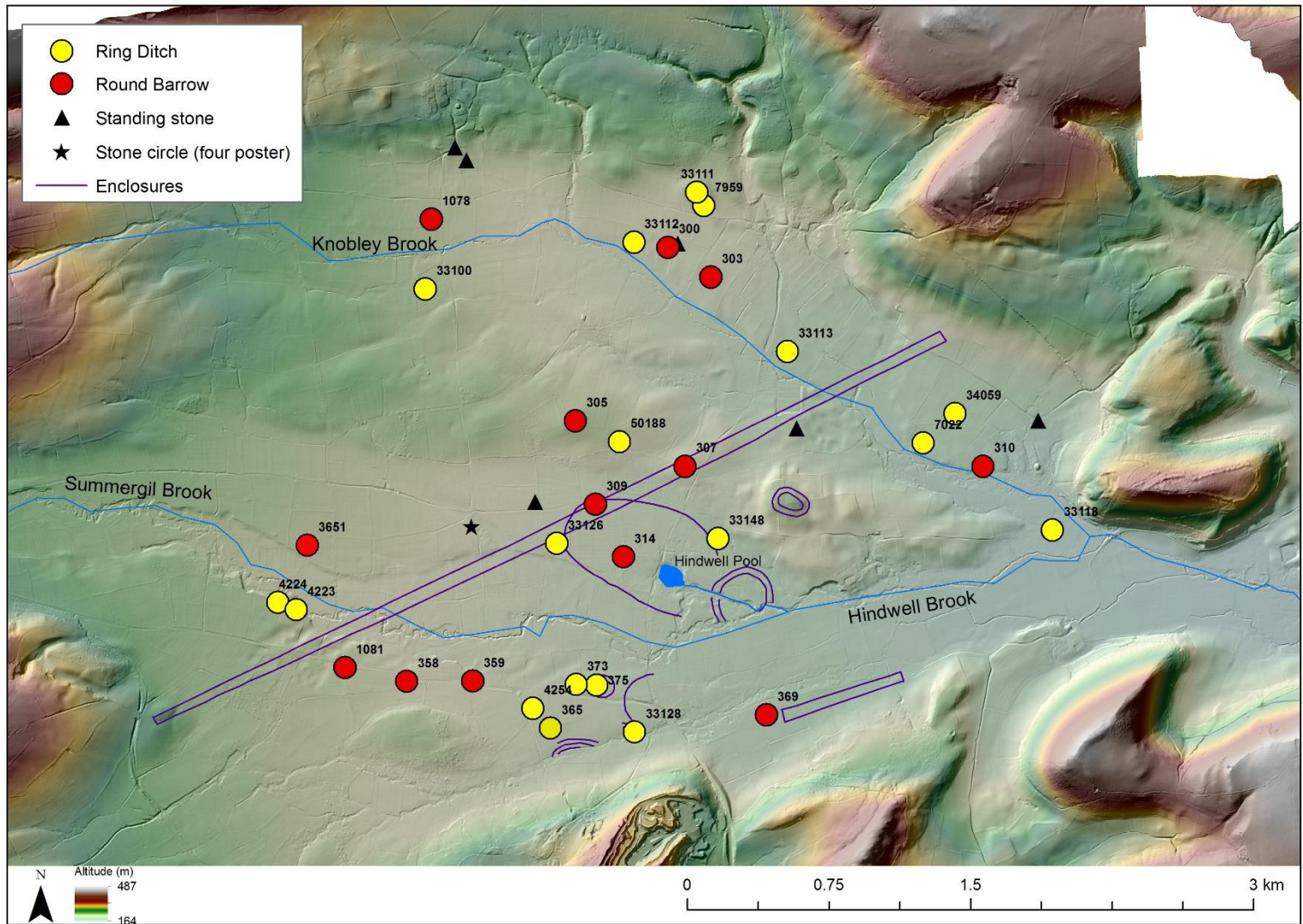


Figure 97: Location of sites at Walton Basin in relation to Neolithic monuments

4.10.2 Description of the Cluster

The cluster, as recorded on the HER, comprises thirty two sites but there are some problems and ambiguities highlighted by later scrutiny of the record by CPAT (Fig 97, Table 21). The ring ditch at Kinnerton (PRN 5650) is now considered of doubtful provenance, and it would seem that there is only one ring ditch at Court Farm rather than the two listed (PRN 7958, 7959). For this analysis these ambiguous sites have been removed. The large Knapp Mount (PRN 359) has variously been interpreted as a motte and a mound, but Gibson (1997, 38) notes that unlike the other mottes in the vicinity it has a rounded rather than flattened top, there is no ditch or bailey and it does not have the appellation of "Castle". Following Gibson, the Knapp mound is included here as a probable round barrow.

There are thirteen extant barrows and these hold diameters of between 20-50m (Fig 98), although the Downton Farm barrow (PRN 3651) is no longer visible and has likely been completely ploughed out. The height of the barrows, where recorded, ranges from 0.5m to 5m, with most rising to around a metre. Ploughing appears to be reducing the heights and also the periphery of some of the barrows considerably (Gibson, 1999, 72, table 2; Jones 2013). Conversely ploughing may also contribute to an apparent increase in diameter of some of the barrows as demonstrated by comparison of surveys conducted at Court Farm barrow II (PRN 303) with the earlier estimates recording the maximum diameter of this barrow at 38m, increasing to 50m for the latest survey. Nevertheless, the barrows still trend towards the large size with the majority between 26-36m. The diameters of these barrows may be a result of aggrandisement with excavations at Hindwell Farm II (PRN 309) and Hindwell Ash (PRN 307) appearing to demonstrate enlargement phases (see below). It is notable that the extant barrows do not appear to have ditches but excavation at the round barrows mentioned above (see also below) have found ditches present beneath what appears to be enlarged mounds. Given this and the large number of ring ditches, there is a strong possibility that ditched round barrows were a preferred constructional method.

The ring ditches display a broader range of values for diameter with 7m the smallest example (PRN 33126) and eight ring ditches holding diameters of less than 20m. This perhaps indicates the presence of former barrows that were not subject to enlargement. The largest feature, the Walton Court Farm ring ditch, has a diameter of

100m and most likely represents something different from the other ring ditches. Subject to trial excavation (Jones, 2010) the ditch was found to be 2.0m in width at the top, narrowing to 0.25m at the base and 1.42m in depth. A fragment of hazel charcoal recovered from a basal fill has been radiocarbon dated to 2570-2300 cal BC (SUERC-26430, 3945±35) and whilst this does not date the construction of the ditch the excavator suggested it may have been built not long before this due to the presumed rapid weathering of the ditch sides to form the initial infilling (ibid., 10). Although bearing some similarity to the so called “formative henges” (Harding 2003, 13) the lack of any evidence for a bank and the late date may suggest something different again with Burrow (2012, 179) hinting at a monument peculiar to itself.

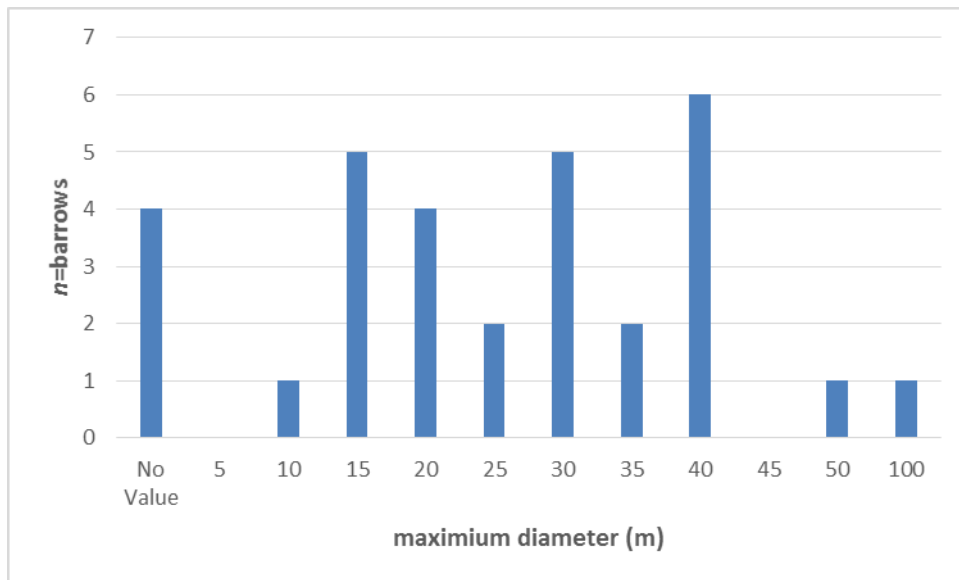


Figure 98: diameters of Walton Basin round barrows and ring ditches

Table 21; Walton Basin cluster data

PRN	Name	Diameter (m)	Height (m)	Nearest neighbour (m)
300	Court Farm Barrow I	36	0.7	81
303	Court Farm barrow II	50	0.7	81
305	Upper Ninepence barrow	20	0.35	105
307	Hindwell Ash barrow	36	1.1	105
309	Hindwell Farm barrow II	36	1.1	108
310	Knobley Brook Barrow	27	1.8	108
314	Hindwell Farm barrow I	30	1	141
358	Harpton Court barrow	26	1.5	141
359	Knapps Mount	25	5	182
365	Walton barrow I	27	0.5	182
369	Walton Green barrow	37		230
373	Court Farm barrow	?		230
375	Walton Court Farm ring ditch	100		257
1078	Crossfield Lane barrow	36	1	257
1081	Crossway Barrow	26	2	276
3651	Downton Farm Barrow	?		291
4223	Crossway ring ditch	20		291
4224	Downton ring ditch	12		316
4254	Walton barrow II	12		317
7022	Burfa Bank ring ditch	35		319
7959	Court Farm ring ditch I	?		335
33100	Rough Close barrow	34		335
33111	Evenjobb ring ditch I	24		340
33112	Rough Close ring ditch I	38		349
33113	Evenjobb ring ditch II	12		370
33118	Ditchyeld ring ditch	16		371
33126	Hindwell ring ditch	7		371
33128	Walton ring ditch	13		421
33148	Hindwell Ash ring ditch	16		499
34059	Womaston ring ditch	?		565
50188	Rough Close ring ditch II	12		708

4.10.3 Round barrows and ring ditches of the Walton Basin

The Hindwell Farm barrow II (PRN 309 Fig 99), located within the perimeter of both the Hindwell palisaded enclosure and the Hindwell cursus, was subject to trial excavation in 2013 to investigate the threat from agriculture (Jones, 2014).

Geophysical survey and aerial photography had previously revealed two concentric ditches holding diameters of about 24 and 30 metres, an inner segmented ditch, a central pit and a number of radial anomalies (Gibson 1999, 49–53). A small trench confirmed some of these features and revealed a primary turf mound of c.13m

diameter. A ditch was subsequently dug around the mound which increased the external diameter of the monument to around 33.5m with the mound now enlarged by the upcast from the ditch to around 28.5m across. The inner ditch was not located in the trench and may instead reflect changes in the barrow composition. One of the radial anomalies was investigated and is thought to represent a Roman field oven and the elongated anomalies associated with what appeared to be a segmented ditch were not apparent in the trench.

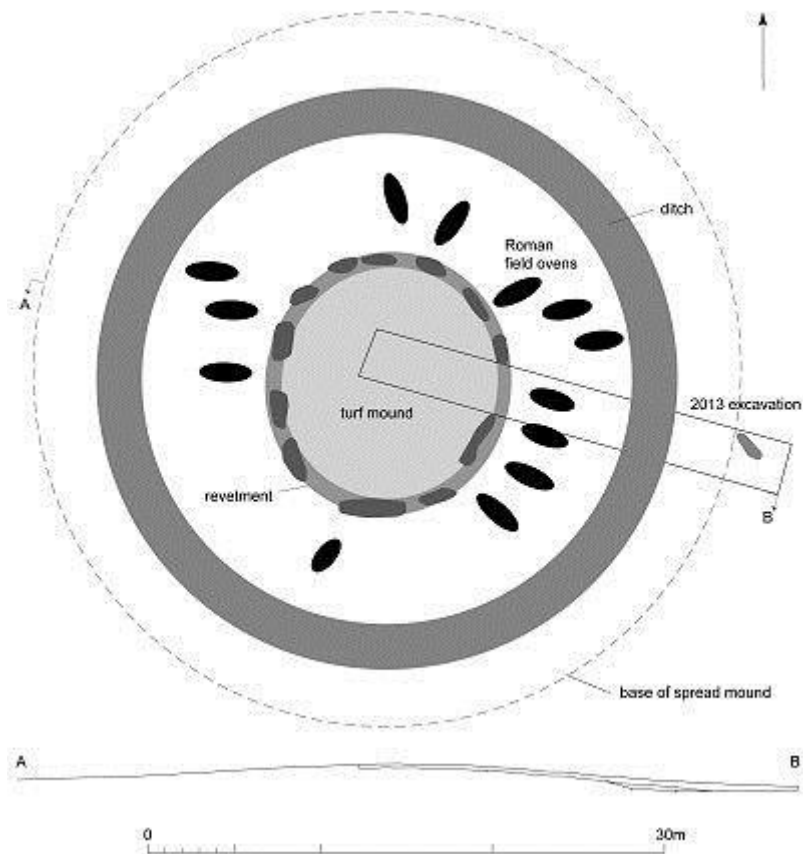


Figure 99: Interpretative plan of Hindwell Ash barrow II, based on evidence from geophysical survey, cropmarks and excavation (Jones 2014 fig. 7)

A similar sequence was revealed within a 10m x 10m trial trench at the heavily denuded Hindwell Ash barrow (PRN 307 Fig 100) in 1992 (Gibson 1999, 20–5) but here traces of pre-barrow activity in the form of postholes dated to 2400-1930 cal BC (CAR-1480, 3730±70) formed a small irregular feature. This was partly covered by a turf mound of c.10m in diameter which appears to have been raised over a pit, most likely representing a central burial. An irregular encircling ditch of 2m width was dug eccentrically around the turf mound to a projected diameter of c.30m, cutting a gully feature containing a small amount of possible Neolithic pottery, and again the upcast appears to have been utilised to enlarge the primary mound. Excavators at both of the Hindwell barrows believe that the ditches were masked by the spread of the

secondary mound due to ploughing. The re-use of the barrow is again attested to by hearths dating to the Roman period within the top of the mound.

Hindwell Ash barrow

PRN 307

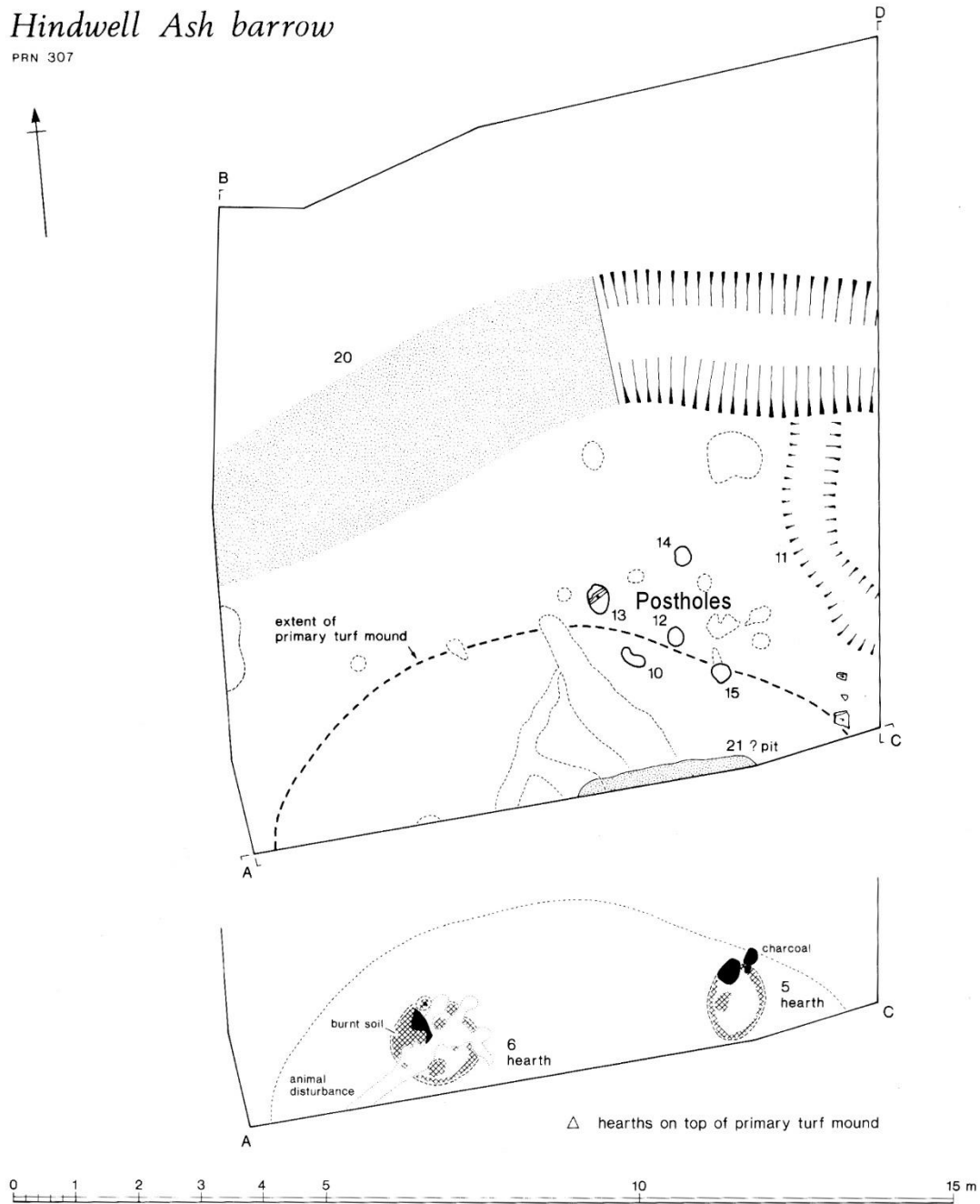


Figure 100: Hindwell Ash trial excavation (after Gibson 1999)

The Upper Ninepence barrow (PRN 305) is primarily known for its pre-barrow Neolithic features and these are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. It was first noted by Dunn (1966) who recovered around 700 flints from the ploughsoil, mostly small flakes and waste but including some diagnostic Neolithic pieces including a petit tranchet derived arrowhead, polished axe fragments, points, scapers and also what appears to

be a thumbnail scraper. Dunn also found fragments of calcined bone and pottery and led him to suggest that it represented a disturbed secondary burial. The barrow was found to be reduced by c.10m in diameter and 0.65m in height and was thus subject to rescue excavation in 1994 (Gibson 1999, 29–47). This barrow represents something different to the two barrows discussed above in that its large diameter is the result of a single phase. The mound was constructed from turf and topsoil and contained flint flakes and a small amount of Neolithic potsherds. No primary burial or pit was found but three small fragments of a probable Collared Urn and a Food Vessel Urn found in the mound and on the old ground surface probably represent secondary burials. A Roman period hearth was again located at the top of the mound.

4.10.4 Cluster cohesion

The round barrows of the Walton Basin are often grouped together within the literature due to their spatial isolation from other round barrows and their topographic situation, although they are not usually deemed to comprise a distinct cluster. The barrows are mostly dispersed, with distances ranging from 100m to 500m and greater, but nearly half of the sites are located at distances of between 300-400m (Fig 101). The cluster appears to comprise three broadly linear groupings which occupy ‘corridors’ following the lines of the brooks and the ridge. It is noticeable that the western extents of the riverine groupings are marked by round barrows on either side of the stream, perhaps signifying a metaphysical boundary. To the east the confluence of the streams, and thus the groupings, is marked by a solitary ring ditch. A large area of the basin - roughly east and central - has a noticeable absence of sites.

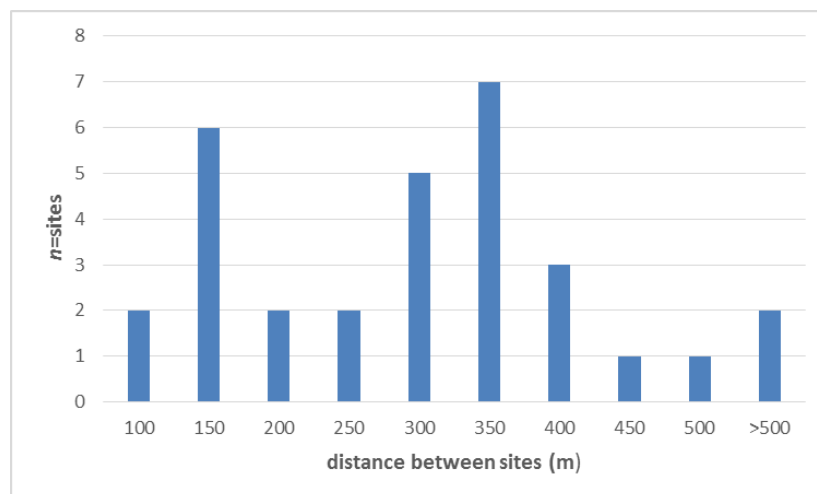


Figure 101: distance between sites at Walton Basin

4.10.5 Visual relationships

Although field visits were undertaken at the Walton Basin, the fieldwork as described in the other sections was largely eschewed for visibility analysis due to the sites location in cultivated land and problems with access. Instead the GIS was used to create viewsheds, utilising a DTM derived from the Environment Agency's 2m resolution Lidar data.

The results of the visual analysis are summarised in Table 22 and the maps provided below (Figs 102-4). There is a high degree of intervisibility *within* the three groupings but intervisibility *between* these elements is partly restricted. The round barrows and ring ditches that lie to the north of the Knobley Brook are not visible from the sites south of the Summergil. The same is true for the most part when considering the obverse, although some southern sites are visible from the slightly elevated site of the Evenjobb ring ditch (PRN33111). The ridge barrows taken as a whole have a virtually panoramic view across the whole of the basin with the Upper Ninepence barrow (PRN305) in particular afforded the most unrestricted intervisibility of the cluster, capable of viewing every site with the exception of the Ditchyeld ring ditch (PRN33118) located at the eastern confluence.

It is probably unwise to read too much into the results of the visibility analysis. Whilst the types of visual cues noted in the other clusters may have also existed here, they are difficult to distinguish in a largely level landscape. That said, visual restrictions could be achieved by the careful use of vegetation if desired.

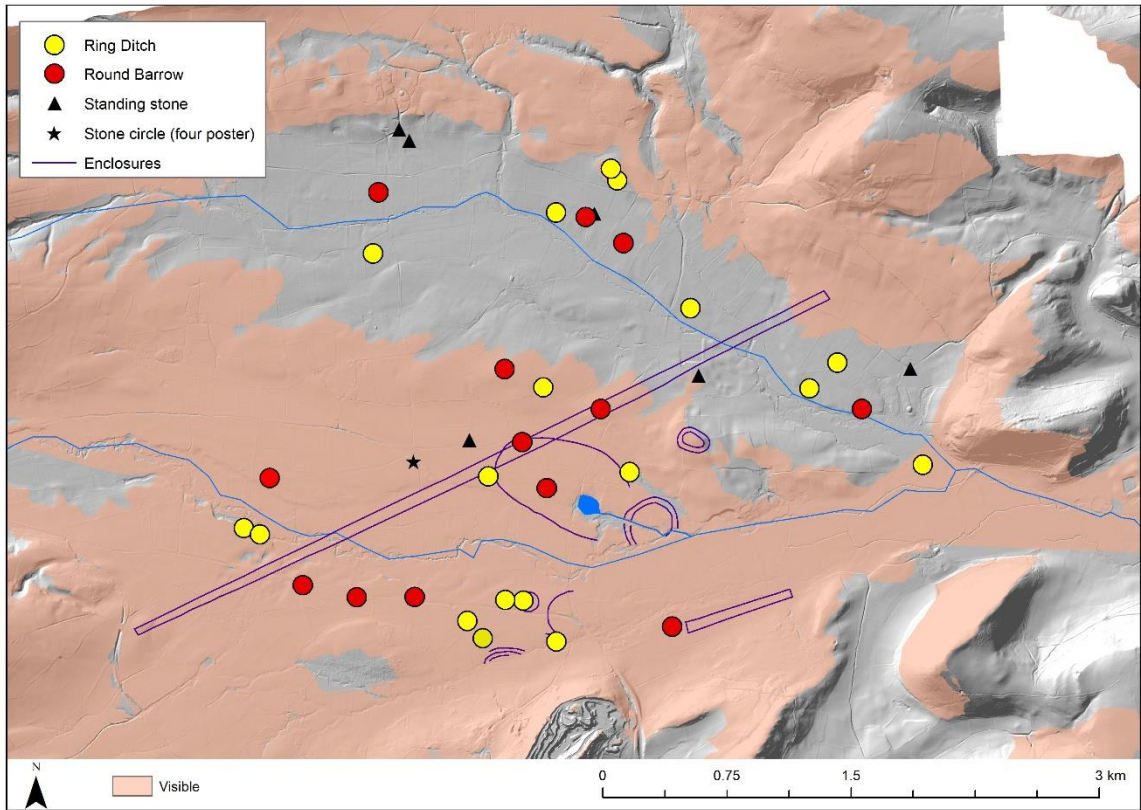


Figure 102: Viewshed from the southern grouping at Walton Basin

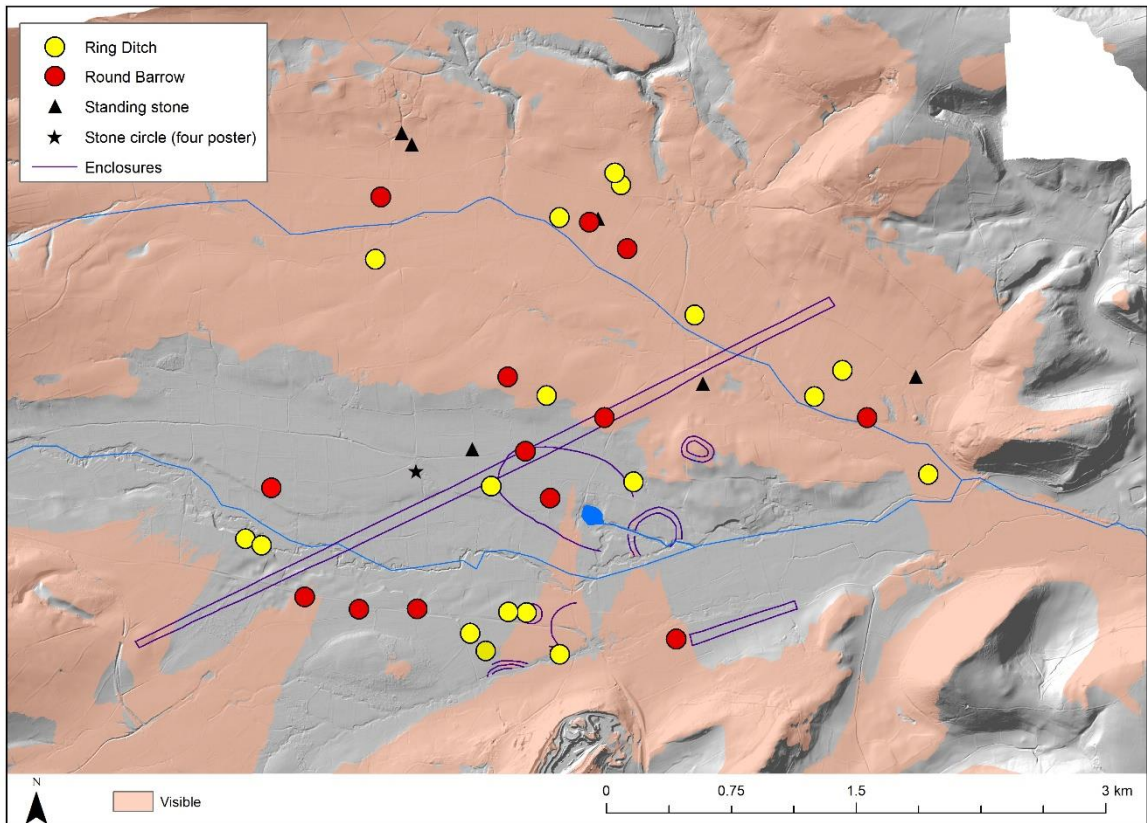


Figure 103: Viewshed from the northern grouping at Walton Basin

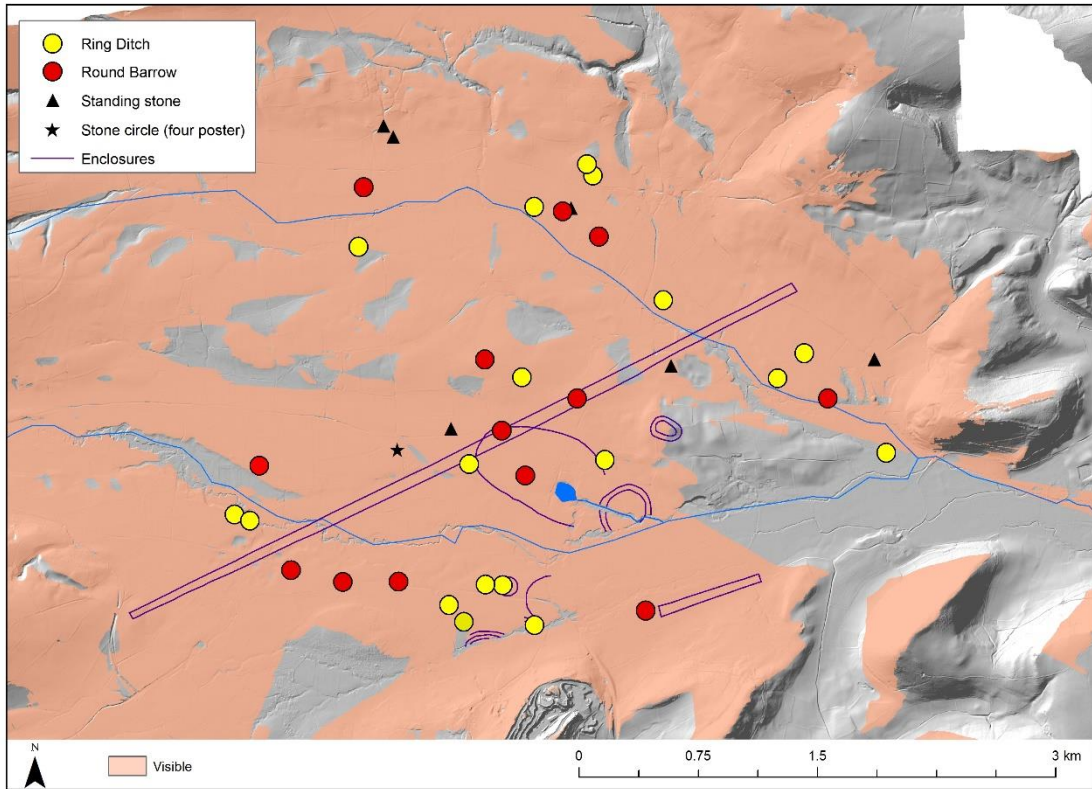


Figure 104: Viewshed from the central grouping at Walton Basin

Table 22: intervisibility at the Walton Basin cluster

PRN	300	303	305	307	309	310	314	358	359	365	369	373	375	1078	1081	3651	4223	4224	4254	7022	7959	33100	33111	33112	33113	33118	33126	33128	33148	34059	50188		
300		x	x	x		x								x						x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x			
303	x		x	x		x								x							x	x	x	x	x	x					x		
305	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
307	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
309			x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x										x	x	x		x	
310	x	x		x										x							x	x	x	x	x	x					x		
314			x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x									x	x	x		x	
358			x	x	x		x		x	x	x				x	x	x	x	x									x	x	x		x	
359			x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x									x				x	
365					x		x	x	x		x	x	x			x	x	x	x									x	x				
369			x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x			x	x	x	x		x						x		x				
373			x	x	x		x		x	x	x		x			x	x	x	x									x	x			x	
375			x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x				x	x	x	x					x				x	x			x	
1078	x	x	x			x															x	x	x	x	x	x					x		
1081			x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x			x	x	x	x					x				x	x			x	
3651			x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x			x		x	x									x					
4223			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x									x		x		x	
4224			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x									x	x			x	
4254			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x									x	x			x	
7022		x	x	x		x								x								x	x	x		x	x	x					
7959	x	x	x	x		x						x		x							x		x		x	x	x		x			x	
33100	x	x	x			x								x							x	x		x	x		x				x		
33111	x	x	x	x		x				x	x		x	x							x		x		x	x		x					
33112	x	x	x	x		x								x							x	x	x	x								x	
33113	x	x	x	x		x								x							x	x		x	x							x	
33118	x	x				x						x										x										x	
33126			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x										x			x	
33128			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x			x					x	x				x	
33148			x	x	x		x		x							x	x	x	x									x					x
34059	x	x	x	x		x								x								x	x	x	x	x	x					x	
50188			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x									x	x	x	x		

X=site or location is visible

4.10.6 Topographic relationships

It is possible to discern distinct topographic preferences to the wider cluster. The majority of the round barrows and ring ditches follow broadly linear arrangements lining the brooks and the central ridge. Three barrows are located along the elevated section of the ridge, whilst much of the remainder are located on the terraces overlooking the streams. To the north the majority of the sites are located on the northern bank of the Knobley Brook whilst to the south the obverse is true of the Summergil Brook. In addition, the southern barrows are restricted to the land east of the Hindwell Pool excepting the Walton Green barrow (PRN369).

The siting of lowland round barrows and ring ditches close to watercourses is well attested (Woodward 2000, 73-4) and a variety of reasons may be posited for this preference. They may be prosaic - in that barrows are located close to, or within settlements and settlements require water – or that the barrows are located on the margins of usable arable or grazing land (Field 1998, 316). Streams and rivers are also arterial routeways, providing a means by which to navigate through unfamiliar terrain, but the placement of round barrows on terraces overlooking these routes would also signal to travellers an occupation of the nearby landscape. Although it is unlikely this would have been the original intent, the barrows could be recognised as denoting exclusion, but conversely may also alert one to habitation and possible hospitality. Moving from the mundane, the watercourses themselves may have been imbued with powerful meanings (Strang, 2008) with barrows placed to overlook these interfaces with the spirit world (McOmish et al., 2002, 50). This association with water may also account for the small number of round barrows and ring ditches located between the ridge and the Summergil Brook where a spring rises forming the Hindwell Pool which feeds the Hindwell Brook. The siting of barrows near springs and winterbournes is frequent elsewhere and Field (1998, 322) notes similarities with burial sites sited in similar positions in China which allow the life forces of the deceased to flow away.

4.10.7 The cluster and its place within the landscape

Whilst there is a long tradition of monumentality at Walton Basin, that is not to say that its primary importance as some form of ceremonial centre necessarily continued

into the Early Bronze Age. Rather, the basin perhaps demonstrates the wider cosmological shift, including the decline in construction (if not always use) of large scale ceremonial centres that appears to have taken place during this period in Britain (Bradley 2007, 88-177). The construction of the Walton Court Farm ring ditch (Jones 2010), built not long before 2570-2300 cal BC (SUERC-26430 3945±35 BP) appears to be the last expression of this tradition. Indeed, there is no reason to believe that the Walton Basin held any greater importance to a wider population during the Early Bronze Age than many other places in ceremonial and wider life. Whilst there are a reasonable number of barrows, it is not unparalleled in the borderlands although the propensity for building on a grandiose scale seems to have endured. Nine sites within the basin have recorded diameters of over 30m, including the large earthwork of Knapp Mount which Alex Gibson (1999, 10) has suggested may be more akin to the large mounds of Silbury Hill, Duggleby Howe and Marlborough.

The barrows are dispersed and positioned upon terraces alongside the streams and the ridge that divides the streams and otherwise occupy much of the basin, whereas previously monument building appears to have been restricted to the south and east below the line of the Hindwell Cursus. The dispersed nature of the sites, which for Britnell (2013, 43) suggests a landscape partitioned into the holdings of different family groups, appears to be in keeping with a number of other large clusters in the borderlands such as Bromfield, Shropshire, approximately 28km to the north-east (Stanford, 1982; Buteux & Hughes, 1995; Hughes *et al* 1995). Similarities include the confluence location; the broad linearity of the clustering and the range of sizes employed (Fig 105). Indeed this latter point is particularly pertinent in that Bromfield has a sizable round barrow - Robin Hood's Butt - of similar dimensions to the large Knapp Mount. Excavated in 1884, cremated remains were found at a depth of 10 feet along with a bronze implement (Fortey, 1885).

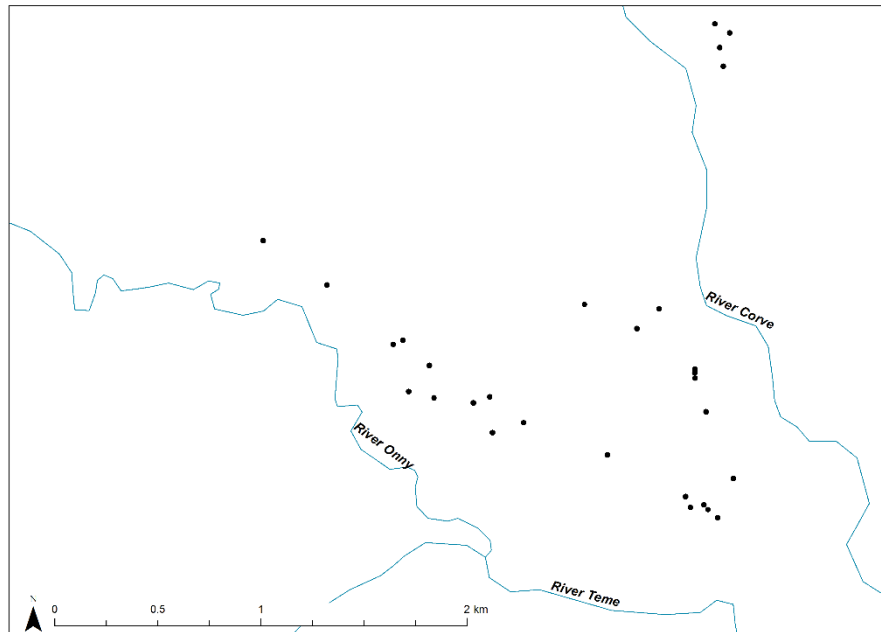


Figure 105: Round barrow clusters at Bromfield, Shropshire

Whilst it is likely that the earlier enclosures and other features remained visible for some time and were in some cases respected, their initial significance to a wider population waned. Excavations at the Hindwell Ash and Upper Ninepence barrows (Gibson 1999) have revealed small scale activity and features sealed beneath the barrow mounds and these perhaps demonstrate a predilection for barrow construction at more intimate places (see Chapter 2), and the Walton Basin and its environs evolved to reflect local rather than regional or national concerns. The number of barrows within and above the basin may be a manifestation of a sizable population centre with good access to crops and grazing. The large size of many of the barrows may also be a reflection of this population density, with extended family members and wider kin groups contributing to their construction. It is unlikely that this fertile and favourable location was reserved as a landscape of the dead; evidence for possible settlement activity comes from a trial excavation in 1994 of an irregular curved cropmark enclosure close to the Upper Ninepence barrow which revealed a shallow flat based ditch with possible internal bank (Gibson 1999, 19-20). This has been dated by short-lived material found in the basal silts to 1880-1520 cal BC (SWAN-21 3390±70). A large number of Bronze Age flint scatters also attests to non-funerary activity with the greatest density coming from the central ridge area and the northern half of the valley (Gibson 1999, 27). Substantial quantities of flint are derived from the ploughed remains of barrows, most likely representing residual material incorporated into the barrow mounds. This may suggest that the round barrows were not constructed in places reserved solely for settlement activity, at least initially, and

perhaps demonstrates the integration of funerary and non-funerary practices. Rather than being perceived as a ritual landscape it is perhaps more appropriate to consider that these round barrows were constructed in a living landscape that incorporated all aspects of daily life.

There are six standing stones in the basin, although only three of these are considered to be in-situ. Gibson (1999, 8-9) suggest their linear arrangements are followed by present routes or tracks which may represent ancient routes from the basin through the eastern gap in the hills to the Midlands plain. It is possible that the stones extending to the interior of the basin may have led to The Four Stones (Fig 106). This four poster stone circle is placed approximately central to the basin and may have acted as locus for the ceremonial and ritual activity of the population.



Figure 106: Four Stones stone circle.

Ringed by higher ground with passes or 'gateways' to the east and west the topography of the basin may have given its occupants a sense of a world within the world. Burrow (2011, 47-8) has suggested the reason the Walton Basin was the focus for the complex of Neolithic enclosures was its strategic position along a natural route linking the uplands of Wales to the lowlands of England, today followed by the A44. This sheltered location, at the junction between uplands and lowlands provided a natural meeting place for communities from these two areas but during the Bronze

Age the original purpose of the enclosures, still visible in the landscape were no doubt long forgotten, to be remembered only in myth and legend.

4.11 Cluster H: Upper House, Powys

The Upper House cluster is a small group of cairns located on the south-western flank of an undulating upland area c.5km south-east of Llandrindod Wells, the highest point of which, Gilwern Hill, rises to 439m OD (Fig 107). The wider area appears to have become a focus for activity during the Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age, attested by a number of monuments including a stone circle, two stone rows, standing stones and round barrows which are found dispersed across the moorland and enclosed improved pastureland.

Earlier activity is restricted to finds such as stone axes and appears to be confined to the river valleys and the lower hill slopes around Llandrindod Wells (information derived from CPAT HER). Similar complexes of upland round barrows, standing stones and stone rows can be found approximately 3km to the north at Careg-wiber Bank and Little Hill, and within the Ithon Valley, south of Llandrindod Wells 3.5km to the north-west. To the south the pattern is different; here barrows are isolated or to be found in pairs, such as those found on the Carneddau, an imposing landform that dominates the near horizon. It has been suggested that the high number of sites recorded east of the Ithon and on the Glascwm commons, may in part reflect the pattern of archaeological fieldwork (Jones 2004, 154). Whilst this may be so, it is interesting to note that the distribution of barrows and other monuments does not appear to be solely a product of differential survival; many are to be found within the enclosed pastures.

The Upper House cluster is representative of these complexes and was chosen for analysis because its situation on open access land allowed for unhindered access to most of the sites. Although many of the sites considered here have depressions in their centres, there are no recorded excavations, and recent work has been confined to survey (Dunn 1988; Jones 2004; Hayman & Horton 2010).

4.11.1 Topography

The Upper House cluster is clustered around a small saddle (370m OD), situated at the western edge of an upland block, which rises from the lower lying lands to the west at the confluence of the Rivers Wye and Ithon. The landscape falls away to the east and west, and rises to the north. To the south the land rises briefly before dropping to the Dulas valley below, which separates the Gilwern Hill landmass from that of Carneddau. The immediate landscape has a number of small localised summits, particularly to the north of the saddle. The micro-topography comprises three local summits, two of which are to the south of the saddle. Views are extensive to the east and west, encompassing the lowland valleys and distant upland skylines. To the north the landscape is largely restricted to the immediate topography. To the south the eye is drawn to the imposing bulk of the Carneddau and the skyline of Aberedw and Gwaunceste Hill. The landscape is largely treeless and thus afforded views unrestricted by vegetation. A modern road utilises the col as a route connecting the Wye Valley to the Edw valley in the east, perhaps eschewing the Dulas Valley due to its boggy nature.

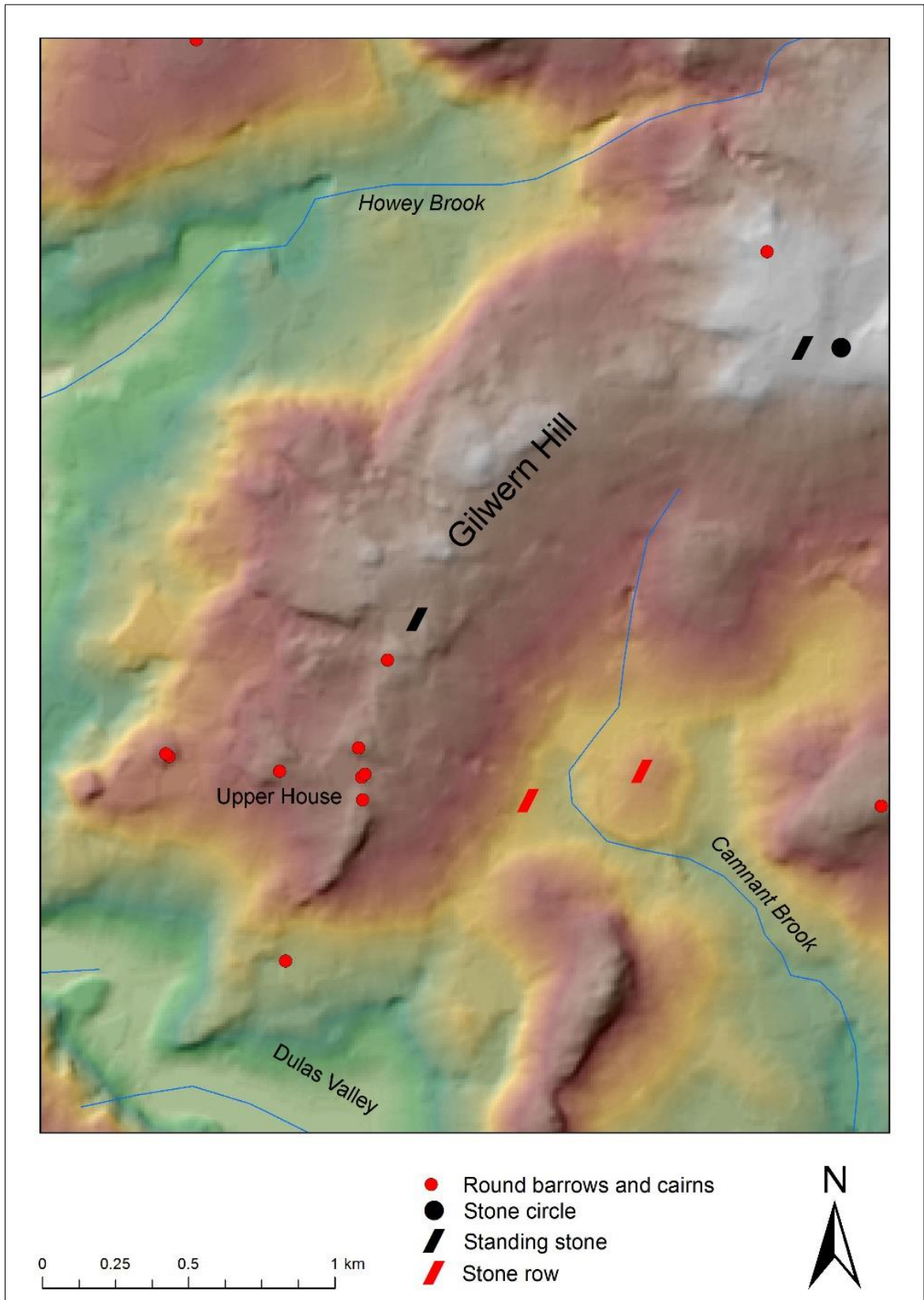


Figure 107: location of the Upper House cluster

4.12 Cluster and sites description

There was some confusion at this location, with sites listed on the HER but not visible at the locations, and with some other sites wrongly located, resulting in a larger number of records than existed in reality. Grid references obtained during the fieldwork are used in place of those provided by the HER to locate the cairns on the plan below.

The cluster consists of a nucleated core of four cairns, each being less than 100m from its nearest neighbour and carefully sited to make use of the local topography (Table 23, Fig 108). These are situated within a landscape occupied by other isolated and paired cairns and stone monuments.

Table 23: Upper House cluster data

PRN	Name	Diameter (m)	Height (m)	Nearest neighbour (m)
841	Upper House Cairn II	11	0.9	40
842	Upper House Cairn III	11	0.9	87
1096	Graig Cairn	30	1	87
81275	Upper House Cairn V	3	0.2	40
2828	Upper House Cairn I	8	0.3	280
2808	Bower Barrow I	7	0.3	14
4099	Bower Barrow II	4	0.4	14

4.12.1 The nucleated element

PRN 841 – Upper House Cairn II

This small, stony, grass covered cairn is the northernmost of the nucleated element, situated just below a localised summit in a false crest position (Fig 109). Hollows in the centre attest to unrecorded digging and demonstrate the cairns composition. It is intervisible with the other two cairns to the south. A large outcrop resembling a recumbent stone in size and form is visible to the north-east and the cairn atop Gelli Hill is prominent on the skyline. It has extensive views in almost all directions except for a small arc to the north-east which is blocked by the slope of the hill. The cairns on Aberedw Hill to the south-east are clearly skylined from here.

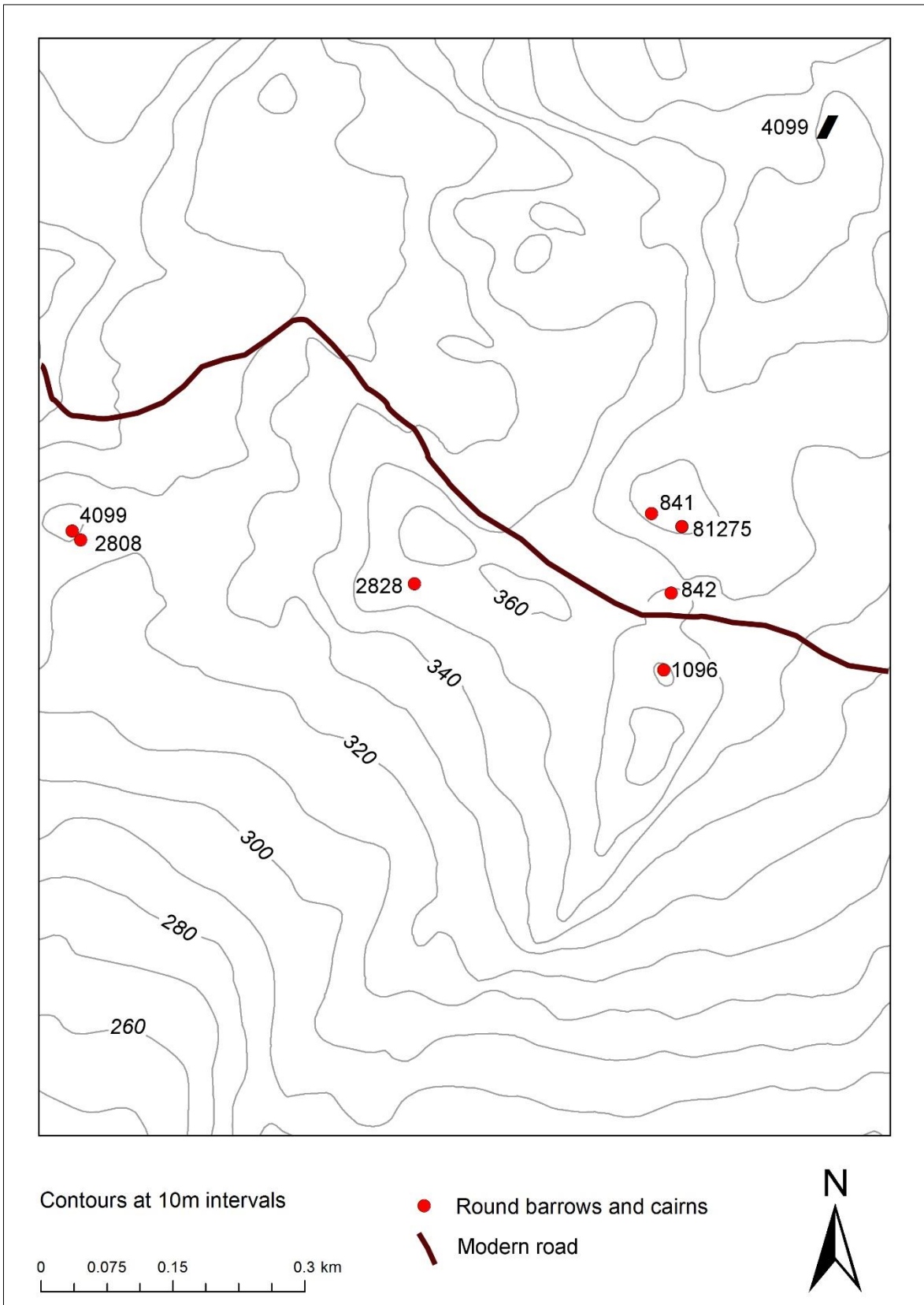


Figure 108: location of the Upper House monuments

PRN842 – Upper House Cairn III

There seems to be some confusion in the HER record regarding this cairn, and another, PRN38698. The HER places 842 some metres to the north-west and on the east side of the trackway. The description in the HER for 38698 is clearly the same as 842, and the grid reference places it at the point for which 842 should be located. Thus 842 and 38698 are in fact the same cairn.

This cairn lies on the saddle proper, positioned partway between two hillocks and appears similar in dimensions and structure to 841 (Fig 110). Like the aforementioned, it too has witnessed robbing of the central area. A vertical slab to the WSW of the cairn in appearance appears to be a small standing stone (PRN4108) but recent burning of gorse has shown that it is in fact part of a larger outcrop of rock. Again the use of a localised high point on the saddle was chosen as the site of the cairn, perhaps to enhance its prominence when approaching from the east or west. Views are extensive and unhindered by local topography to the east and west. The northern aspect is dominated by the hill on which 841 is sited and this cairn (841) when viewed from 842 appears skylined. The summit to the south partially blocks the view in that direction. Cairn 1096 is visible but is not prominent in its denuded state. Again the Gelli Hill cairn is a prominent landscape feature.



Figure 109: Looking south to cairn 841

PRN1096 – Graig Cairn

The grid reference provided by the HER does not match the description and has been updated to account for this. This turf covered cairn is described as being 30m in diameter and is located on the lower knoll of the hillock to the south of the road (Fig 110). Large quarry scoops have destroyed much of the south-western quadrant of the cairn. The northerly cairns are visible and 841 is skylined from here. Similar views to the valleys and ridges of the east and west are afforded from this cairn. The immediate south is blocked by the rise of the hill and to the north the mid ground of the local topography dominates the view although the farther ridges are visible. Once more Gelli Hill cairn is prominent on the horizon and Upper House cairn I (PRN 2828) is now visible, but in this denuded state is difficult to make out; in its pristine state it would have formed a skyline feature on the saddle when viewed from 1096.



Figure 110: View south from Cairn 841 to the col and two cairns. The long level ridge is Aberedw.

PRN81275 – Upper House Cairn V

This is a small stony cairn located on a local summit, slightly higher than cairn 841. It is intervisible with 841, 842 and 1096 and also to the Gelli Hill cairn. To the north-east

a large smooth outcrop of stone is visible, resembling somewhat a fallen standing stone.

4.12.2 The outliers

PRN 2828 – Upper House Cairn I

This small grass covered cairn is sited on a saddle to the west of the nucleated element. There are a number of small mounds, c.3m in diameter in close proximity to this cairn, similar in appearance to that of cairn 81275. The centre of the cairn shows evidence for robbing and a small mound directly to the east may be the spoil from the disturbance. The bulk of the hill blocks views to the north, to the south the bulk of Carneddau dominates and the high ridge of Aberedw Hill is also visible with cairns skylined. To the east, the adjacent ridge restricts outwards views and cairn 1096 is skylined from here. The location of cairns 2808 and 4099 is visible, although the cairns themselves were not.

PRN 2808, PRN 4099 – Bower Barrow I & II

It was not possible to obtain permission to visit these barrows. The HER records record them as lying beneath modern clearance and their status is uncertain. It is probably safe to assume that they share reciprocal views with 1096 and 2828.

4.12.3 Cluster cohesion

The cohesion of the grouping is derived primarily by the clustering of sites around the saddle or col. A nucleated grouping of cairns exists within the larger cluster identifiable by close proximity and visual relationships. It is likely that the proliferation of closely spaced cairns in what appears to be landscape of rather more isolated monuments in similar land use regimens reflects a real density and thus marks this location as having some significance.

4.12.4 Visual Relationships

It is clear that intervisibility between all sites was not a factor at this cluster, in spite of the relative proximity of the barrows to each other (Table 24 Fig 111). That is not to say that intervisibility had no part to play here. Although the barrows are not all intervisible, no cairn is completely isolated from a visual perspective. It is also worth noting the visual connection between other clusters and groupings. The large Gelli

Hill cairn is a prominent landscape feature from many parts of this landscape and all of the sites in the col group maintain a visual link with this cairn. The cairns on Aberedw similarly stand out at this location providing recognisable markers on the ridge.

Table 24: intervisibility at the Upper House cluster

	Barrows visible						
	841	842	1096	2828	81275	4099	2808
841		x			x		
842	x		x		x		
1096	x	x		x	x		
2828			x			?	?
81275	x	x	x				
4099	?	?	?	?	?		?
2808	?	?	?	?	?	?	

4.12.5 Topographic relationships

There is an element of linearity within the grouping, with three cairns on a roughly north-south orientation and a further cairn offset to the west. Cairn 842 lies at the lowest point of the col, flanked by 841 and 81275 to the north and 1096 to the south. These latter cairns occupy locations of the same altitude so that they appear to be on the same horizontal plane. The placement of the cairns may have been to emphasise their visibility from the col; cairn 841 appears false-crested from the col and the effect may have been evident at the other two cairns in their original un-denuded state. Whilst avoidance of summits is often considered in terms of false-crested - the assumed desire to enhance or achieve optimal visibility from lower lying positions - this is not always so apparent in practice. Cairn 2828, lying 300m to the north-west of 1096, eschews the local summit to the north which places it out of sight of three of the col cairns and does not appear false-crested from other vantage points. In this instance it appears precise topographic placement of the cairn was of more importance than maintaining intervisibility with the main col grouping. As has been detailed at other groupings, it must be considered that there may have been some imperative that dictated that the absolute highest points were not used.

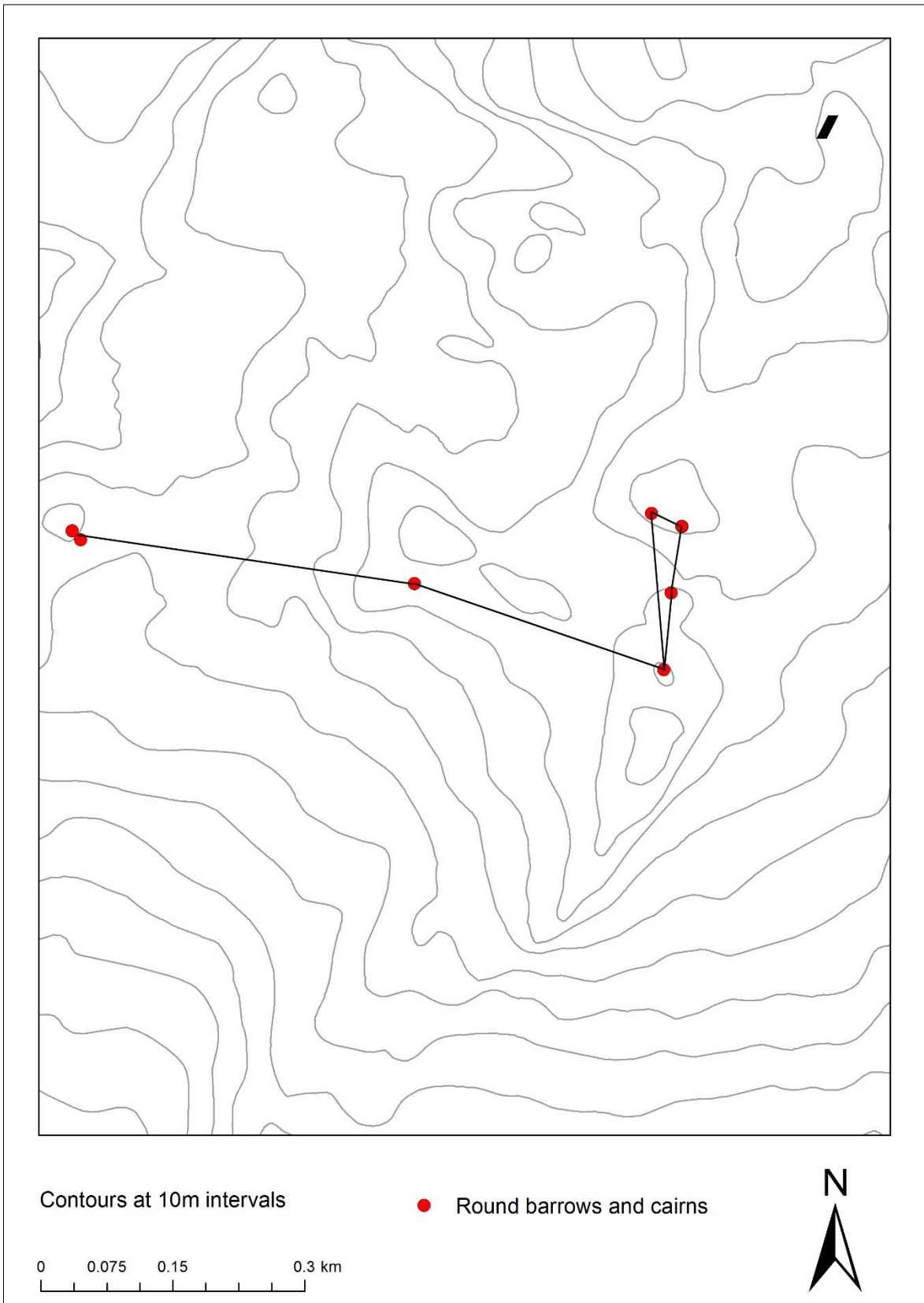


Figure 111: intervisibility at the Upper House cluster

4.12.6 The cluster and its place within the landscape

The similar morphologies and micro-topographic settings of the barrows within this cluster suggest a coherent template. Local summits were utilised but their highest points were avoided, although whether this was to facilitate and enhance their *local* prominence, or because there was some restriction on the use of high points at such a location remains speculative. In any case, the siting of a cairn on the summit of Gilwern Hill to the north-east demonstrates that true summits were not avoided altogether in this local area and as such the precise placements at the col can be seen as deliberate and meaningful acts.

The barrows at the col may have played a part in defining the edge of a landscape; they are located perpendicular to the direction of travel if one was to venture from valley to valley and may have been strategically placed at this boundary. Col locations have been identified as significant places utilised by barrow builders in Wales (Roese 1982, 585; Leighton 1984, 328) and may be considered “places in between”, both topographically and perhaps socially. Often they are marked by single isolated barrows, such as those found at Corndon Hill (see above), the nearby Giants Grave (PRN 338) and Pwll Brwynog (PRN 38312) but occasionally they appear as small tight nucleated groups, for example the Cae Glas barrows beneath Warren Hill in Radnorshire. Occasionally stone alignments and settings can be found in the immediate vicinity (Roese 1982, 585). Such locations are often regarded as having territorial significance marking the boundaries of naturally defined land units (Gibson 2002, 23). However, it does not necessarily follow that such an explanation should mean that these sites act as barriers facilitating exclusion. Round barrows and cairns, constructed at liminal points and infused with culturally charged media such as human remains, pottery and stone and metal objects could have been used as means of cementing and displaying social relationships forged between neighbouring social groups. The evidence from the dispersal of cultural objects, materials and ideas suggests a degree of mobility during the Early Bronze Age but the mechanisms and social implications of this movement are less clear. It would however be desirable that such movement is unimpeded. This can be achieved in a number of ways but perhaps the easiest is by reciprocal rights. Unhindered passage is afforded in the knowledge that it may be required by the grantee in the future, such agreements may be more or less formal. Following Fleming’s (1971) work, it is often implicitly assumed that barrows define and demarcate a landscape, presumably erected by the usual

occupiers of that landscape, but if barrows are created in response to events other than the death of significant individuals, it may be that these were constructed in response to negotiations that facilitated passage through a landscape and thus were created by diverse groups.

Less than a kilometre to the east of the col, two stone rows have been identified (PRN 1047; 4100) both having disproportionately large stones, in excess of 2m in height, at one end and with three stones aligned north-south (PRN 1097) and four stones more broadly east-west (PRN 4100). Short stone rows may be found near other rows or stone circles, are often graded in height and may have associated pits (Burl 1993, 152-180). Although little understood there is some evidence to suggest that the north-south axis may reflect a concern with the heavens, particularly with regard to the moon (Ruggles 1999, 75-6). Just over 2km to the north-east a stone circle and standing stone (now prone) lie in a col between Gelli Hill and Gilwern Hill close to an imposing summit cairn (Grimes 1963, 130-2). This large cairn, unlike those at the col, is a prominent landscape feature and is visible from the cairns at the col and from the wider landscape. Whilst it cannot be said with any certainty that all of these monuments are contemporary with the col cairns, they do serve to identify this location as one of some significance.



Figure 112: The Court stone row



Figure 113: Looking north-east from Cairn 1096 to the summit cairn on Gilwern Hill

Not all cols are marked with barrows and cairns, and possible reasons for their construction at these locales have been outlined above, but the proximity of a stone circle may also have some bearing on this grouping. The col marks the route ascending the ridge of Gilwern Hill that leads to the stone circle and summit cairn (Fig 113). The positioning of the barrows may thus indicate a nodal point, possibly along a routeway that passes over the col in what appears to be a recurrent theme in the borderlands.

4.13 Cluster I: Begwyns, Powys

The Begwyns cluster lies at the extreme southwest of the study area, five kilometres north-west of Hay on Wye, and consists of seven sites separated, at their furthest, by a distance of marginally over two kilometres. The cluster is recognized as such by its topographic situation and isolation from other round barrows and clusters. All of the sites described on the HER record were located during fieldwork. All of the sites, bar one (PRN 400), appear to be unambiguous barrows given the caveats of relying on external morphology alone. Previous archaeological work has included survey and reconnaissance by Dunn (1974), the National Trust in 1997 and by CPAT as part of the RRF survey. A pre-modern unpublished excavation is thought to have occurred at one site. The relatively good survival of the extant barrows would suggest that the distribution of sites within the cluster is real.

There is little evidence of prior usage of the Begwyns although earlier activity is attested for in the Bachawy Valley by the discovery of two Group VIII axes near Painscastle. Flint scrapers have also been found on the lower northern and eastern slopes of the hills. A number of standing stones have previously been recorded on the Begwyns, many of which were unlocated during the recent surveys by CPAT.

4.13.1 Topography

The Begwyns is an undulating heathland common of approximately 500 hectares, located just north of a major loop in the River Wye (Fig 114). At its centre is an unnamed hill surrounded by a number of smaller hillocks. In between these local high spots the areas of level terrain are often boggy and numerous pools have formed. The almost completely treeless landscape allows extensive views from most locations within the common. Immediately to the north the land drops to the east-west trending Bachawy Valley before rising to the form the ridge of hills dominated by Llanbedr Hill. The views from the south-east to the south west form an impressive unbroken vista of the Black Mountains to Pen-y-fan in the Brecon Beacons.

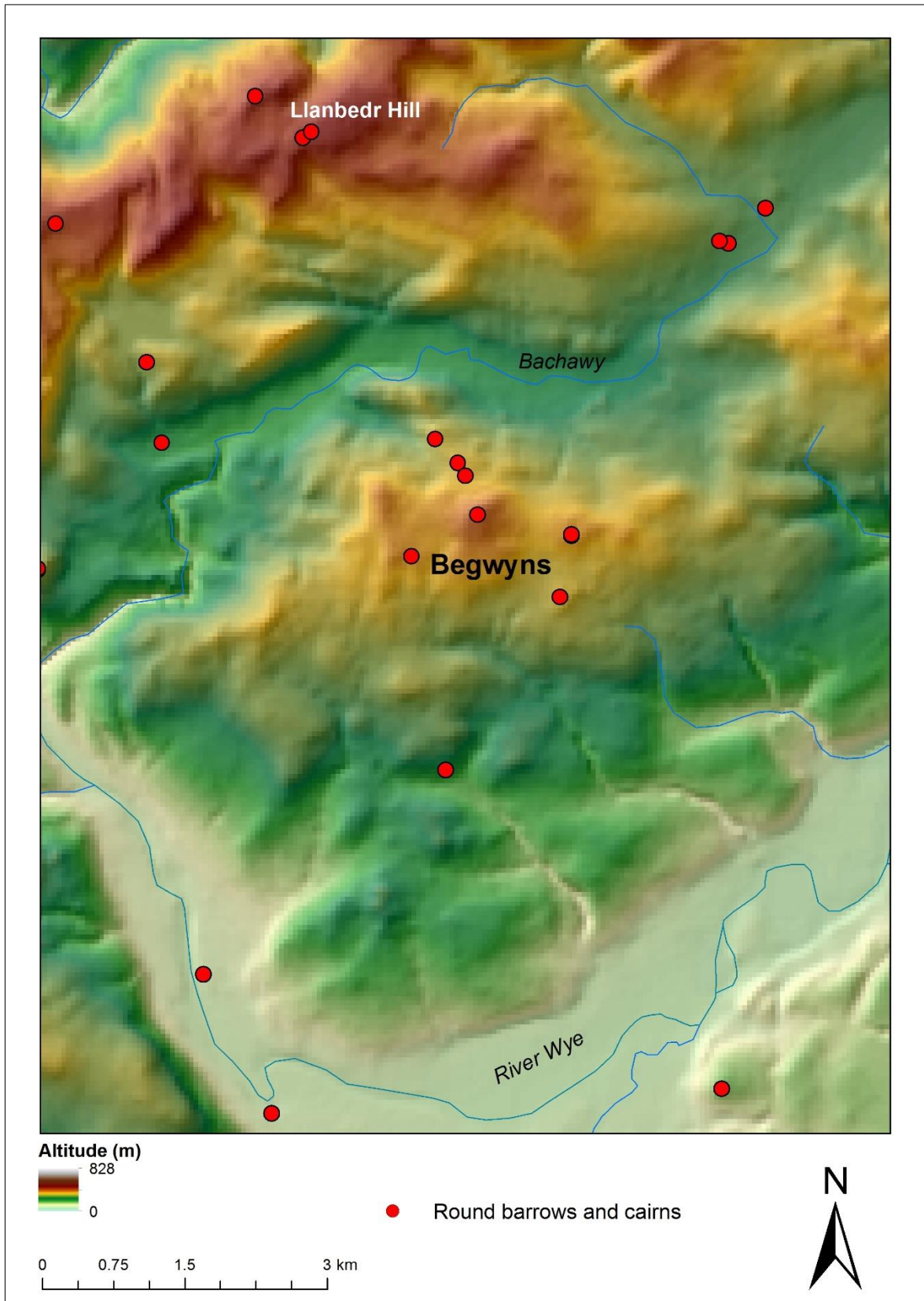


Figure 114: location of the Begwyns cluster

4.13.2 Cluster description

The Begwyns cluster consists of a dispersed group of seven sites of varying morphology. Based upon visual determinations, the majority of the sites in the group can be categorized as simple bowl barrows or cairns (Table 25, Fig 117). The sites are mostly widely spaced with what appears from a plan view to be a small grouping of three barrows to the north of the cluster. Distance between sites ranges from 161826m. Possible robbing in antiquity has occurred at three of the sites (81229, 81224, 39390).

Table 25: Begwyns cluster data

PRN	Name	Diameter (m)	Height (m)	Nearest neighbour (m)
400	Roundabout barrow	12	0.6	430
403	Maesgwyn barrow I	20	1.6	660
39390	Bailey Bedw ring cairn	20	0.7	660
6472	Begwyns Common barrow	7	0.6	826
81224	Begwyns barrow III	9	0.7	161
81226	Begwyns barrow IV	8	-	346
81229	Begwyns barrow VI	11	1.3	161

PRN 400 – The Roundabout Barrow

This site is perhaps the most ambiguous of the cluster (Fig 115). Located within a stone walled enclosure atop the highest point of the Begwyns, and now tree covered, it is defined by earthworks which have been interpreted as a possible ring cairn or robbed out barrow (Dunn 1974) the latter being the most likely explanation. The nature of the site meant that assessing precise views to other barrows was impossible but as would be expected the long views outwards would have been panoramic.

PRN 403 – Maesgwyn Barrow I

This, the largest of the sites in the cluster has been excavated, possibly in 1930, although the excavator and the location of any finds are unknown (Dunn 1974, 101). The large hollow left by the excavation provides some clues to its structure. Deep rabbit burrows on the inner walls of the barrow surrounding the hollow indicate an earthen mound whilst stone found at the base and from the spoil from the interior suggest an inner cairn. The barrow is on a hillock with streams encircling much of its circumference. To the north, views outwards are largely restricted to the local topography but the views from the south east to the southwest are open and long,

encompassing the high ground of the Black Mountains and the Brecon Beacons. The Roundabout is visible but it is unclear whether the barrow would be hidden as it is by the plantation. In common with most of the Begwyn sites, the barrow is not readily visible until the observer is almost upon it. The ring cairn to the north is visible on the skyline.

PRN 39390 Bailey Bedw ring cairn

This site appears to be a composite monument - an outer bank, or ring, is separated by a slight ditch, perhaps the source for some of the bank material, from a small cairn which reaches almost to the bank. In form it appears similar to the monument found on Stapeley Hill, Shropshire (see chapter 6). Although the chronological relationship cannot be determined, it has been noted previously that the interior of ring cairns may be modified by the addition of other elements. It is sited approximately 30m southwest of the summit, a factor which may be explained by its appearance on the skyline when viewed from the Maesgwyn barrow.

The views to the east are obscured by the immediate rising ground and the view to the west is dominated by the Roundabout. Northwards the local topography hides the Bachawy Valley but longer views are to the Llanbedr Hill range. The views outward to the ESE-WSW are impressive including the skyline of the Black Mountains and the Brecon beacons down to the Wye Valley. The Maesgwyn barrow is visible but difficult to discern, a result of looking down upon a barrow covered by the same vegetation as the surrounding landscape.

PRN 6472 Begwyns Common barrow

This low, seemingly earthen mound, lies on a slight ridge, downslope from a local summit to the east. It is elevated from a boggy area with pools of standing water to the north. Views to the east and west are dominated by local topography including the bulk of the roundabout hill. Long views are to the north and south to the hill ranges previously identified. Although the trees of the Roundabout are just visible, the barrow does not have a visual relationship with this putative barrow or any other. Its siting may be explained by being elevated above the large flat boggy expanse landscape immediately to the north. Streams also rise in close proximity.

PRN 81229 Begwyns barrow VI

This small barrow lies at the base of the Roundabout hill and above a stream channel that rises from the hill. When viewed from within its immediate landscape the barrow appears quite distinct, but this effect is diminished when viewed from more elevated positions due to the vegetation cover. The Roundabout trees are visible but it is uncertain as to whether the summit barrow would be. There is a direct line of sight to Barrow IV (81224) but again the effect is not striking, the barrow melds into the background vegetation.



Figure 115: View westward to the trees on the Roundabout from the Bailey Bedw ring cairn

PRN 81224 Begwyns barrow III

Similar in size, location and apparent construction materials, to that of barrow VI, this barrow is sited on a slight col between higher points to the north-west and south-east. The views outward are mostly restricted by local topography to an arc between the north-west and east. Barrow VI stands out well from this site and the Roundabout barrow most likely would have not been visible.

PRN 81226 Begwyns barrow IV

This small unobtrusive barrow does not appear to have been sited for visual impact. It is located just south of a local summit with a steeply dipping slope to the north and west. It is isolated visually from its two neighbours by a small hillock to the south-east, although a standing stone, sited just below the brow of the rise appears to act as a

marker towards these barrows. Its internal structure, revealed on its western edge where it appears to have been truncated by a boundary, is that of small flat stones.

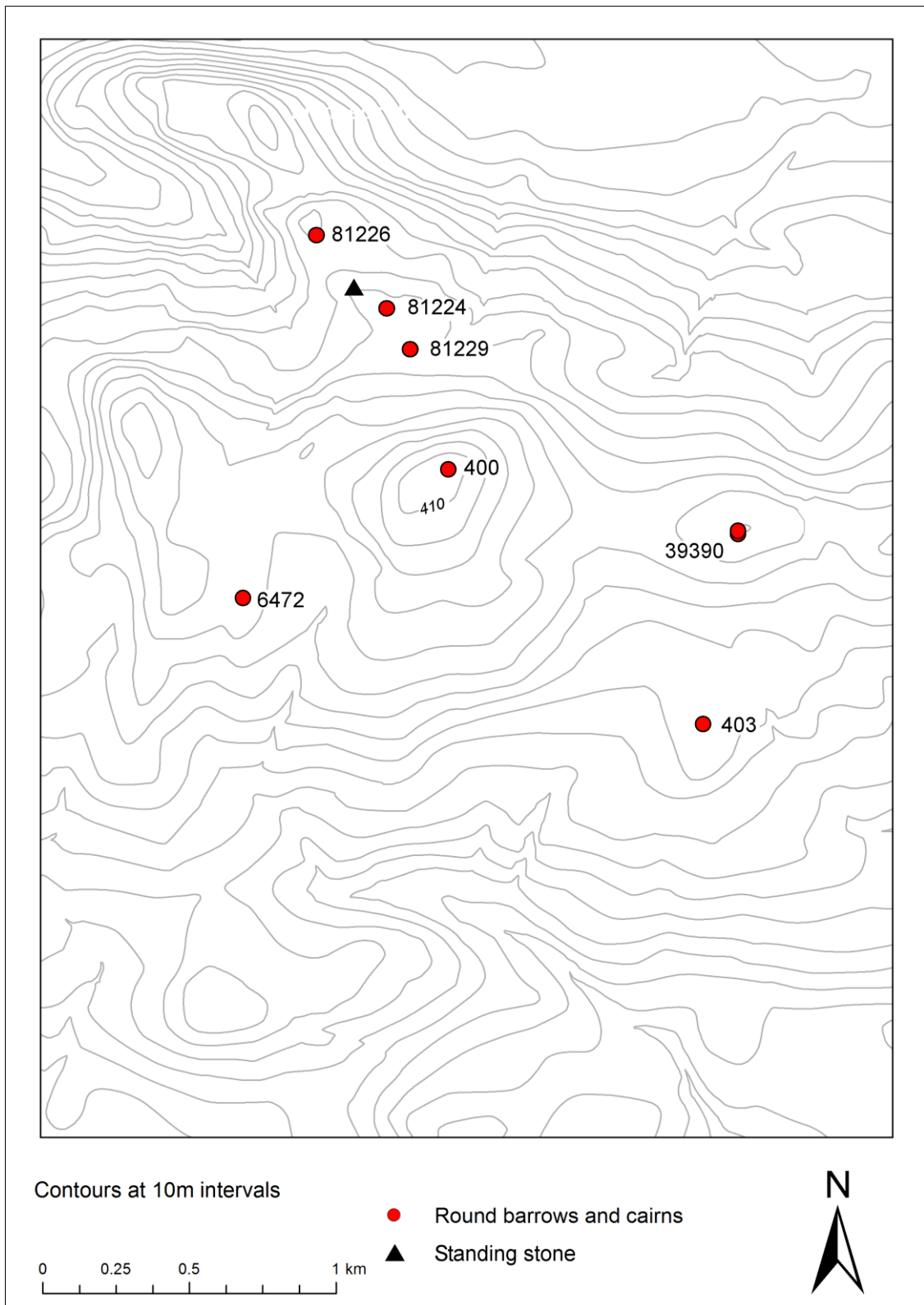


Figure 116: location of sites at the Begwyns cluster

4.13.3 Cluster cohesion

At first sight the cluster does not appear to exhibit an overall cohesiveness. The sites are distributed widely although a small grouping is apparent to the north where two barrows are connected by proximity, c.160m apart and by intervisibility. The northernmost barrow is c.350m away and hidden when viewed from the south by the rising topography. However, an argument could be posited for it forming part of this smaller grouping by virtue of its similar morphology and relative proximity. In addition, the standing stone could be considered part of this complex of sites. This would add an element of linearity, with the standing stone providing a marker for the barrows when approaching from the north.

The factors that define this cluster is that of relative density and isolation from other monuments in the wider area. Whilst the number of sites within this immediate distribution is most likely genuine, the extent may be dependent upon the boundary of the common land.

4.13.4 Visual relationships

Intervisibility does not appear to be a causal factor in overall site location, and the low height of the barrows suggest little concern with being visible from a wider catchment (Table 26, Fig 118). If visibility was a concern at all, the preference was for distant and panoramic views, but again this was not a universal factor at all of the sites with the views from the Begwyns Common barrow restricted largely to the near topography. Although a plan view of the cluster encourages the view that the purported Roundabout Barrow forms a focus for the other sites, this is not evident in practice. If, like the other sites the Roundabout was a low structure, it's visibility from the sites at lower altitudes would make it difficult to see, given the broad, domelike nature of the hill. In its modern setting the trees and enclosure give the barrow a prominence that would not otherwise be apparent. Due to the difficulty in ascertaining views from the Roundabout barrow in the field, a viewshed was calculated (Fig 117), the results of which are subject to the caveats mentioned in the introduction. This suggests an almost complete lack of intervisibility with the other barrows with the possible exception of the Bailey Bedw ring cairn. It also demonstrates that barrows

situated almost anywhere in the immediate environs would be subject to a lack of intervisibility.

Table 26: Intervisibility at Begwyns cluster

PRN	Sites visible						
	400	403	6472	39390	81224	81226	81229
400		?	?	?	?	?	?
403	?			x			
6472	?						
39390	?	x					
81224	?						x
81226	?						
81229	?				x		

Intervisibility can only be ascertained without doubt in two places, to the north of the Roundabout and to the east, and these visual relationships are themselves limited in their scope - only connecting one site with one other. The ring cairn and the southernmost barrow do seem to have a visual relationship that is deliberate, with the ring cairn sited so that it appears on the skyline when viewed from the Maesgwyn barrow.

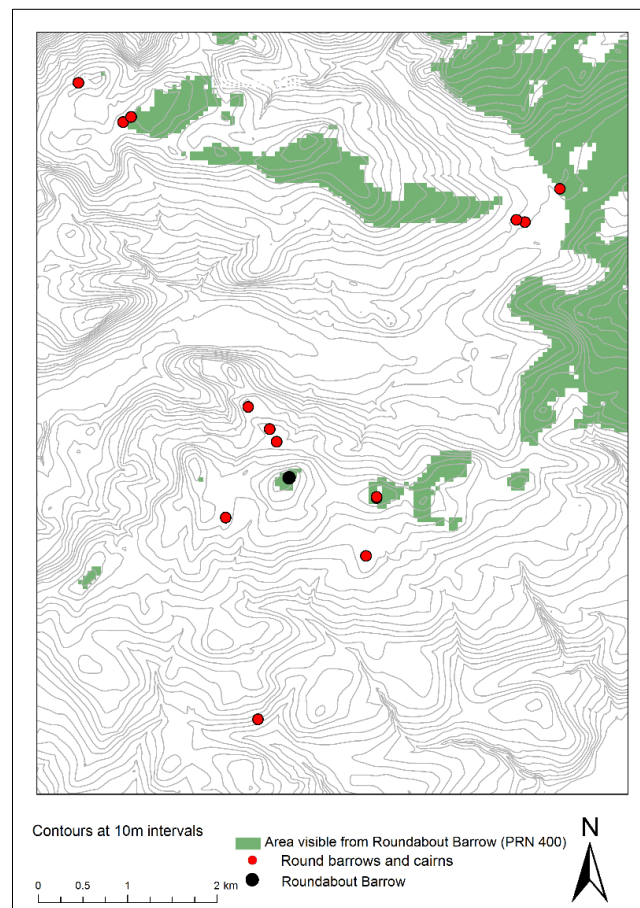


Figure 117: viewshed from roundabout barrow

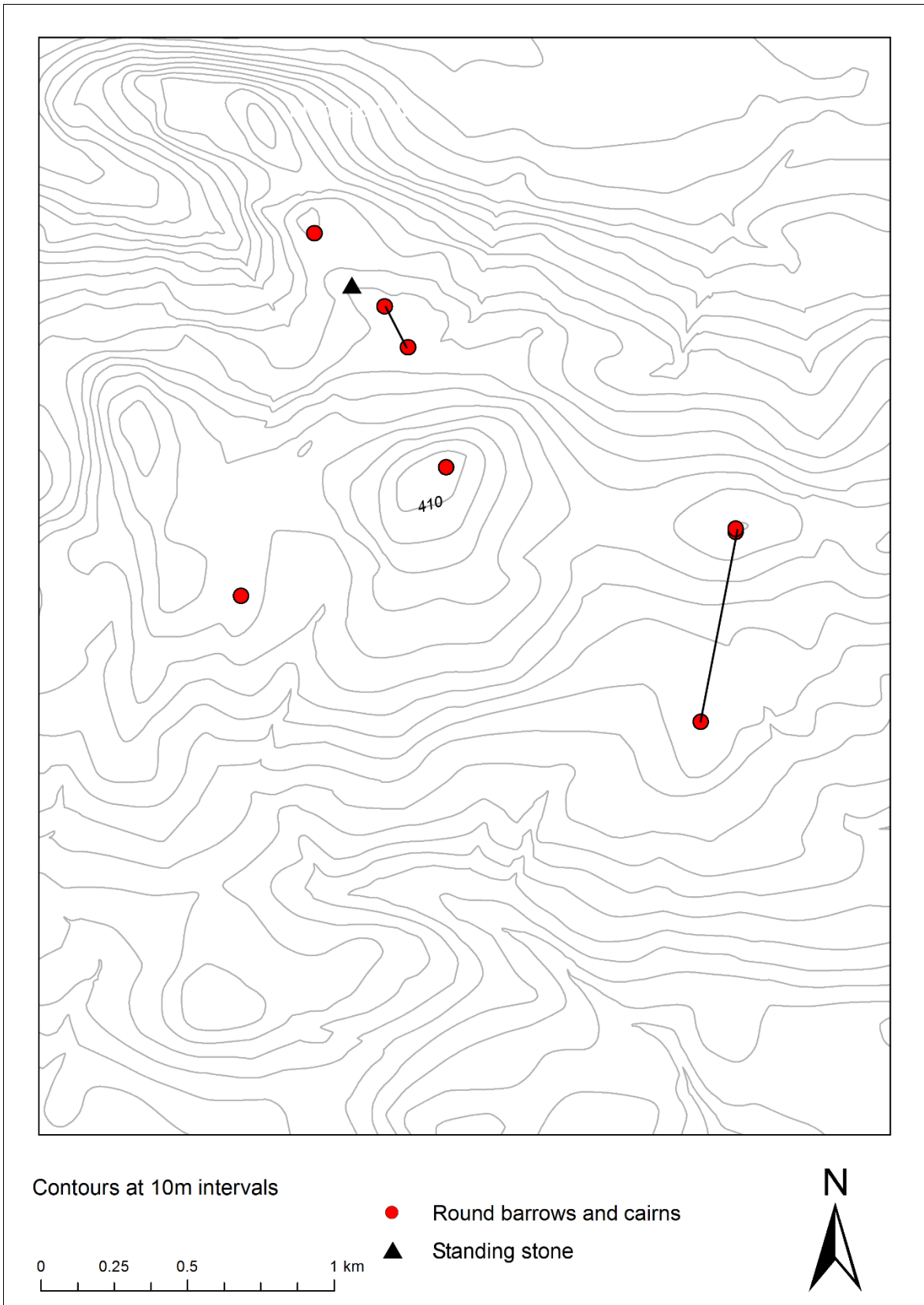


Figure 118: intervisibility at the Begwyns cluster

4.13.5 Topographic relationships

Where the barrows occupy areas of local high ground, their exact location often eschews the highest point, but at these sites their location is such that, for the most part, the eye is drawn to the long views outwards (Figs 119-20), the dramatic skyline of the Black Mountains and the Brecon Beacons to the south and Llanbedr Hill to the north.

The Begwyns form a relatively isolated upland block, distinct from the more contiguous hills to the north, although the area was probably well connected. The river Wye encompasses the area on three sides and to the north the Bachawy valley leads into the Arrow valley - both of which were populated as attested by the barrows and ring ditches which line these valleys. This topographic peculiarity may have marked it as significant, attracting a relatively higher number of barrows than its immediate environs, and although the barrows would not be seen from the wider area, its distinctiveness would make it easily identifiable from afar.



Figure 119: From the Bailey Bedw ring cairn looking south to the Brecon Beacons



Figure 120: View eastwards from Begwyns Barrow IV and showing cairn material

4.13.6 The cluster and its place within the landscape

There are several round barrows and ring ditches in the surrounding landscape, located in the river valleys and on the hills, but these are much more widely dispersed, occurring either singly or in pairs. A comparable landscape, in terms of topography and modern land usage, is that of Llanbedr Hill to the north. Although the open moorland is much more extensive, the only cluster consists of one pair and one single barrow, separated by a distance of c.600m with the nearest barrows to these located a further 2.5-3km away. This suggests that the Begwyns may have been conceived differently by the population of this area.

The subtle differences in landscape settings, concerns (or otherwise) with intervisibility and structural materials at the Bewgwyns suggest a variety of concerns and rationales needed to be addressed. Within this small area there is evidence on the one hand for a need for proximal, if not visual relationships, but also a degree of separation as evidenced by the relative isolation of some of the sites. Taken in isolation these factors could be considered coincidental but these choices – linearity

and placement at local high places but avoiding summits - are evident at other groupings. The linearity of the northern barrows and standing stone is suggestive of a route that ascends from the Bachawy valley to the Roundabout.

The function and meaning of round barrows at the Begwyns may not have remained static through time and the evidence for possible reworking at the eastern sites may demonstrate this. Although the largest monuments are located at the eastern edge of the distribution, this was not always so. The apparent structure of the southern barrow would imply that it started out as a simple, smaller cairn - much like the other barrows in the cluster - before being enlarged with a covering earthen mound at a later date. One reading of the Bailey Bedw ring cairn is that it was modified by the addition of a cairn, a practice observed elsewhere (Lynch 1973, 64-6). Its false crest position when viewed from the southern barrow may also suggest that it is the later monument. It may once have served to accommodate ritual or ceremonial activities at the Begwyns, and perhaps for a wider populace, but once these activities were no longer required the cairn was 'closed' by a mound. It is of interest that such closures take different forms. On Titterstone Clee Hill, the interior of a ring cairn was infilled to create a level platform (O'Neil 1934, 106-110) whilst a 'conventional' turf barrow with stone capping was raised to cover the ring entirely on Mynydd Epynt (Lynch 1973, 72-3). At Bailey Bedw, the size of the mound in the interior is comparable to the other barrows in the cluster, perhaps acknowledging a continuation of tradition. This serves to signal the end of ceremonies here but also stresses an adherence to defined strictures on how a barrow should be built.

Although ring cairns are not uncommon in the borderlands, they do not occur at all clusters and are distributed widely. This distribution suggests that their function was not required by every unit of population, such as family groups, but served a wider population, perhaps united by marriage or shared territorial rights. The nature of the ceremonies conducted at such sites are difficult to elucidate from the remains, but a commonality appears to be the deposition of burnt earth, charcoal and token deposits of cremated human bone into pits (Lynch 2000, 133-6). This burying of constituent components of the landscape along with small amounts of human remains within the ring cairn may have been a final act in the negotiation of access or rights to tracts of land.

It is suggested that the barrows at the Begwyns were constructed to satisfy the needs of a populace that perhaps did not see this landscape as one over which they had sole claim. Round barrows are permitted and perhaps required, homogeneity over some elements of form such as size was controlled, but local preferences and differences may have been accentuated through the choice of structural elements.

4.14 Discussion

The results of the fieldwork presented in the preceding sections has demonstrated a number of similarities and recurrent themes between round barrow clusters and groupings in the borderland but there are also differences and contrasts, such that no two groupings are the same. It will be argued here, through a consideration of the themes addressed in the fieldwork sections that these differences arose from the varied concerns, motivations and needs of local populations and that a single explanation for barrow clustering is unlikely.

A principle objective of the fieldwork was to determine the nature of the clustering of round barrows in the borderland. There have been attempts to classify such aggregations; Ashbee (1960, 34-5) identified *linear*, *nuclear* and *dispersed* cemeteries, postulating that the first two examples were most likely extensions from a single “founder’s barrow”. Fleming (1971, 141-2) further refined Ashbee’s categories, defining spatial limits to the cemetery types of Wessex and adding a further category, that of the area cemetery, noting that elements of linearity may exist in all cemetery types (Table 27). Whilst acting as a useful guide in identifying possible barrow groupings, and allowing for comparisons with other regions, these purely spatially derived classifications do not take other contextual information into account, in particular topographic and visual relationships.

Table 27: cemetery types

Cemetery type	Distance between barrows (m)
Linear	100
Nuclear	100
Dispersed	100-150
Area	200-400

Many of the clusters investigated within the study area have what might best be described as a dispersed nature, or area cemetery to use Fleming's term, although in some cases the spatial dimensions far exceed the established criteria. The argument presented in the preceding sections is that although many of these clusters appear widely dispersed, and may contain multiple elements, there is often a cohesion or rationale to their placement that may be understood when the wider landscape is considered. In some cases that appears to be the appropriation of distinctive topographical locales, which may be due to religious beliefs, superstitions and oral traditions, in others it might be proximity to a desirable resource or to legitimate access over grazing areas or along routeways.

The study has shown that in contrast to other regions, certain factors concerning visibility are not a pre-requisite for groupings in the borderlands. This is not to say that visibility, both to and from monuments was not a concern, but more specifically *total intervisibility* within the clusters was of no particular importance. This general lack of intervisibility cannot be explained by the presumed denuded states of some monuments, or by the effects of vegetation cover, but appears to be a product of the dispersed nature of many of the clusters combined with their precise topographic locations. Intervisibility is often restricted to immediate neighbours and even then the relationship is not always reciprocal. That the major constituent monuments at Corndon maintain intervisibility may of course be incidental, but the utilisation here of the highest points of the local summits is unusual. The avoidance of summits is a commonality at many of the groupings studied but the phenomenon is not entirely unusual, or indeed a regional phenomenon; McOmish et al (2002, 43-8) noted that the round barrows of the Salisbury Plain Training Area are rarely located on the highest and most visible points in the landscape and Fox (1959, 54-5) described the commonality of round barrows on "false crests" which appear as skylines from adjacent viewpoints. In many other studies (Grinsell 1953, 50; Crew 1985, 309; Dunn 1988, 36; Field 1998; Watson 2001, 213) the placement of barrows and cairns away from the highest point is explained in terms of enhanced visibility, both to and from the lower slopes or valleys, areas often presumed to be the location of settlements. Whilst this may be the case at some clusters, Radnor Forest for example (Britnell 2013, 43), for others, such as Cefn Panagored, this explanation seems unlikely and it has been suggested that for some regions at least, known locales were favoured over highly visible ones (Mullin 2003, 19).

Just as visibility to round barrows and barrow groupings is often evoked as a causal factor in their siting, it has also been suggested that looking from round barrows in high places may have been more important than looking to them (Lewis 2007, 82). Roese (1980, 585) does not discount the aesthetic appeal to such placement and Lynch suggests sites such as the kerb circle of Moel Ty-uchaf are deliberately sited in relation to dramatic landscapes and that "...the beauty and grandeur of the rocks and mountains and the broad views over valleys and plains had an importance and value in their own right" (Lynch 1975, 124). This notion of an appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of landscapes is not necessarily the same as that of later archaeologists operating under a phenomenological bent where the stress is usually placed on the careful siting of monuments to create effects or to act as metaphors (Tilley 1994, 1996, 2006) but acknowledges that people's relationship with their landscape went beyond the mundane.

Such appeals for the aesthetic sensibilities of the barrow builders have not been universally accepted (Leighton 1984, 328; Briggs 2012) and Briggs bemoans the fact that the siting of upland barrows and cairns are rarely compared with those in the lowlands and that "if they were, it would soon be appreciated that there is little rhyme or reason to explain the locations of that growing majority of Early Bronze Age burials now known from crop or parchmarks..." (Briggs 2012, 138). Such critique though seems simplistic and overlooks the complexity and diversity of these monuments. If a variety of constructional and depositional practices were utilised to satisfy the needs of different populations, then it is reasonable to assume that such attention should be also applied to their topographic siting. Whilst there is undoubtedly a prosaic explanation for the *general* siting of many round barrows (within a "home territory" for example) the *precise* placement of such monuments was never a random act (Tilley 2004, 202). At the lowland site of Walton Basin there appears to be some patterning, with barrows lined along the streams and ridge, largely confined to one bank except at the extreme western end of the distribution where this terminus is marked by sites on both banks.

It is of course difficult to determine whether the decision to site a barrow such that it would be intervisible with others was a concern (Brück 2004), but it has been suggested that patterns of visibility may be related to social connections between

lineage groups (Tilley 2004, 197). If this were so, the obverse might imply that barrows and barrow grouping in close proximity, yet visibly unconnected, would have been placed at specific locales to draw upon the significance of *place* rather than *people*. That different social groups may claim affinity to a specific place by building round barrows has been suggested by Woodward (2000, 94-6) for the large number of ring ditches at the Devil's Quoits henge at Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire. Such aggregations of round barrows and round barrow clusters close to henges has been noted elsewhere (Bradley 2007, 166-8) and the spatial correlation of round barrows to these and other forms of earlier monumentality is often viewed in terms of social and cultural memory (Rogers 2013). The implication is often that that these focal monuments were still revered, even if they were no longer used (Woodward & Woodward 1996, 290). Indeed, Bradley (2002, 156) suggests the survival of earlier monuments would have presented a problem to later generations; their initial purpose forgotten they would require new interpretations, thus appropriating these features into their world view. The study of the Walton Basin cluster however does not indicate an overriding concern with the earlier monumentality. Within the other clusters examined for this study there was little evidence for earlier monumentality, the possible exceptions being at Corndon and Moel Ty-uchaf. Without excavation it is impossible to discern the chronological relationship between the cairns and the stone circles at these two complexes but the argument presented earlier suggests that they may have been contemporaneous and indeed intimately connected.

As described in the fieldwork sections, the reasons for clustering to occur at certain locales may have a variety of explanations. The barrows, cairns and stone circles at Corndon and Moel Ty-uchaf may have been linked to the extraction and/or the dissemination of resources. At Radnor Forest and the Begwyns, the spatial and visual separation of the round barrows occupying distinctive and possibly significant landscape features may have symbolised the access rights of various population groups that surrounded the hill. The dispersed linearity of barrows along the ridges of the Long Mynd and Banc Gorrddwr may line the routeways along which people and certain desirable resources - animals, stone, metal etc. – travelled, reflecting a “network of social interaction” (Johansen et al. 2004, 50). Concentrations, or particularly dense clusters, may represent nodal points where different routes converge. It is of course likely that rivers also provided a means by which to navigate across what may have been difficult terrain (Sherratt 1996) and as such it is perhaps unsurprising that one of the largest round barrow clusters in the borderlands can be

found at Bromfield, close to the confluence of three rivers - the Teme, Onny and Corve (Stanford 1982). The placement of relatively large numbers of round barrows at these locations may have less to do with defining or demarcating home territories, but may instead point towards a wider populace utilising and perhaps meeting along these routes.

It is clear that round barrows and round barrow groupings were sited in a variety of topographic positions and that there may be a multitude of reasons for this, especially if the timeframe over which round barrows were constructed is considered. It cannot be assumed that the rationale remained the same over time, indeed what may have been the initial impetus may have been lost and instead a tradition of practice may have determined later placements. Similarly there are limitations with regard to the chronological development of clusters, the fieldwork presented here cannot answer such questions.

Chapter 5: A pair of round barrows

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter has provided some possible reasons for explaining why some barrows are placed where they are. It was argued that they may represent nodes, important locations in the lives of a relatively mobile people utilising a landscape and its resources. But understanding some possible reasons for siting does not address the fundamental problem of why build a barrow in the first place. This chapter will address this question by continuing the scalar analysis to the micro scale. It is not intended to provide a regional overview of round barrow excavations, rather for its focus it will take a single, well excavated site and examine in detail the structural and depositional practices encountered, placing the findings into a wider context. Such an approach has been usefully employed to examine how “one Bronze Age community came to terms with death and even used its residues as resource to think about the living” (Last 2002, 52). Applying Giddens theory of structuration allowed Mizoguchi (1992) to highlight the role of memory articulated through a single barrow cemetery. More recently, to address the central question of ‘why build’, Owoc (2007) employed a technical *chaînes opératoire* to examine the choices available when a community decided to build barrows at Charmy Down, Somerset. Concentrating on a single site, Trelystan, where there are two barrows in close proximity with a reasonable degree of contemporaneity, it is possible to mitigate against, as far as is possible with due regard to the data, some of the variables that may be explained away by the mantra of ‘different people doing different things at different times’ often used to explain variability.

5.2 A pair of round barrows at Trelystan, Powys

What follows is an overview of the sequence of burials and construction episodes. The elements of the barrows will then be examined in detail, providing new interpretation and insights into these mounds.

The site to be examined in detail for this chapter is that of Trelystan, Powys (Britnell 1982), which consisted of two, large diameter, seemingly contiguous mounds of up to two metres in height which were subject to total excavation in 1979 due to their

erosion by ploughing. A long sequence of activity was revealed, the earlier phases of which have been described in detail in Chapter 2. To briefly recap, the earliest phase appears to be a cremation burial and a possible inhumation burial within a pit, perhaps once contained within a coffin, and covered by a small cairn. This was followed by non-funerary activity, evidenced by two structures defined by stakeholes associated with hearths and pits, some of which contained deposits of cultural material including Grooved Ware pottery. The area was then utilised in some manner by Beaker using people, identified by residual Beaker sherds within the enlarged barrow mounds.

The plan setting of the features described below are detailed in Figure 121. Towards the centre of Barrow I a rectangular pit was dug, partly stone lined, into which was placed the unaccompanied cremated remains of a young male (burial 1). This was covered by a large, carefully constructed, slightly ovate cairn confined by a kerb of upright slabs set in a foundation trench. A turf capping overlay the cairn and was constrained to the extent of the kerb. An irregular ring ditch was then dug up to 2m away from the cairn, with the stony spoil placed against and over the kerb and most likely covering the cairn as well. A radiocarbon date of 2110-1690 cal BC (CAR-285 3540±65 BP) from a charcoal deposit on the turf cap provides a terminus ante quem for this primary phase of the barrow.

At the outer edge of the ring ditch, two roughly circular pits were dug. The southern pit contained unaccompanied cremated remains (burial 2), possibly of a mature male and was covered by a small cairn. The northern pit appears to have been stone lined and contained a few fragments of the cremated remains of a child (burial 3), sherds of a food vessel and another pot and a flint scraper. The covering cairn of this burial was different to the southern cairn in that it appears to have possessed a kerb. A hole through the cairn into the pit, and the finding of further fragments of pot and bone in the cairn material, suggests a robbing of the burial before the final enlargement of the barrow. Both of these burials had extensive areas of burning less than two metres to the west, dated to 2010-1670 and 2450-1950 cal BC (CAR-278 3500±60 BP; CAR-279 3750±70 BP). Although no stratigraphic relationships exists between the burnt areas and the pits, it is possible they represent pyre sites for the respective cremation burials.

A slab lined pit was dug close to the northern satellite cairn, partly cutting the ring ditch fill, within which the cremated remains of adult male and female (burial 4) were

contained within a Food Vessel and accompanied by a flint object. The pit was dug through a burnt area containing some cremated bone and lay within a setting of five burnt stakes - most likely representing the pyre site. This time a large slab rather than a cairn was placed above the burial. A date of 2270-1780 cal BC (CAR-280 3645±70 BP) was obtained from the stake setting and that of 2290-1900 cal BC (CAR-281 3695±70 BP) from burnt logs.

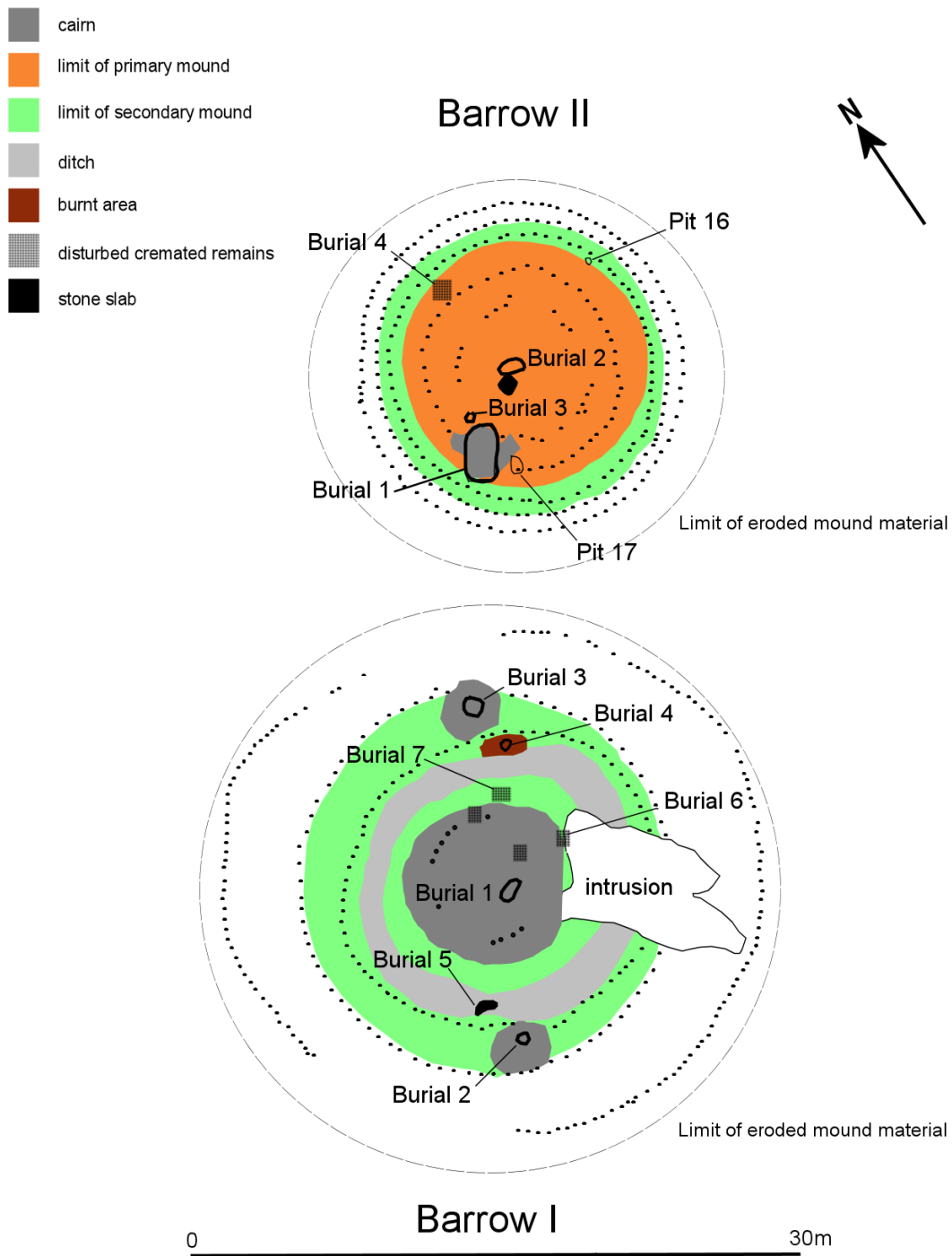


Figure 121; plan of features at Trelystan (redrawn from Britnell 1982)

Everything described thus far was then covered by turf layers, producing the resultant enlarged mound. At the time of excavation this and the primary mound had been truncated but the completed height may have been up to 2m. Three stake circles are associated with this phase. The innermost circle penetrated the turf cap of the primary mound. The middle circle was set out around the outer edge of the ring ditch and traces of horizontal rods suggest a fence like structure. The outer circle had substantial stakeholes - more akin to post holes - and encompassed all of the satellite burials and probably delineated the extent of the enlarged mound. A fourth stake circle lay beyond the edge of the enlarged mound. Into this enlarged mound the unaccompanied cremated remains of an adult male (burial 5) were placed in what appears to be a collapsed cist. Two further disturbed cremation burials (burials 6 & 7) accompanied by food vessels and a flint knife were recovered from the truncated mound along with fragments from further Food Vessels and Food Vessel Urns and probably represent later insertions. Immediately outside the line of stake circle 3, a small slab-lined pit contained charcoal rich soil and unidentified fragments of burnt bone is associated with a date of 1950-1610 cal BC (CAR-277 3455±70 BP).

Barrow II is the slightly smaller northern barrow. The central burial (burial 2) was of a cremated mature female accompanied by a Food Vessel placed in a slab lined sub-rectangular pit of dimensions far exceeding that of the burial and most likely originally covered by a wooden feature. Upcast from the pit overlay a charcoal layer which returned a date of 2120-1690 cal BC (CAR-390 3550±65 BP). An earthen mound was raised which encompassed both this burial and the early pit grave and cairn (burial 1). Into this mound a pit was dug almost to the old ground surface, into which an inverted Food Vessel Urn, containing the cremated remains of an adult male (burial 3) was placed. A date of 2110-1700 cal BC (CAR-283 3500±60 BP) was obtained from oak charcoal mixed with the cremation burial. A further possible burial belonging to this stage may be inferred from a large stone slab, possibly a platform for a cremation burial, found at the top and centre of the primary mound.

Following this, an enlarged but subsequently heavily truncated mound built of turves covered the primary mound and extended the diameter of the barrow. Five stake circles were identified, two of which penetrated the primary mound. The unaccompanied scattered remains of a cremated adult (burial 4) were found in the

mound material of the enlarged barrow and most likely represent a secondary insertion.

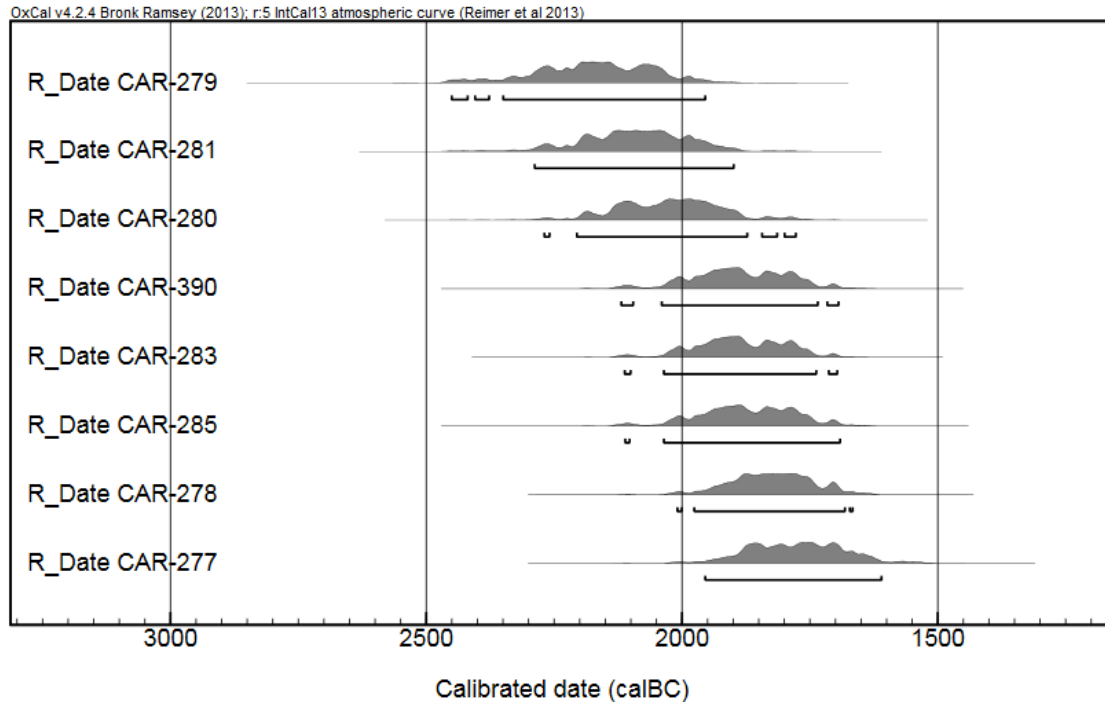


Figure 122: Radiocarbon dates from Trelystan

The excavator suggested two distinct phases for the barrows at Trelystan based upon the independent stratigraphic sequences of the barrows, radiocarbon dates, burial practices and ceramic accompaniments. In the first phase it appears that burials had to be covered by a structure of some description, and where pots were present these accompanied the cremated remains rather than contained them. There is however a wide variation in the precise nature of the burials of this phase, with no two burials entirely alike. Some burials are accompanied by ceramic and lithic material, others not, some pits are stone lined, others not. Yet, if the first phase emphasised difference, the second phase characterised a degree of uniformity. The barrows are enlarged by the addition of turf mounds associated with stakecircles which were interpreted as stages in construction rather than free standing entities. Burials are now inserted into existing mounds rather than being covered by them, an important distinction mirrored by the practice of placing cremated remains inside the pots rather alongside them.

Whilst there is no need to question the phasing, there is scope to provide a more nuanced reading. The precise temporal relationship between the two barrows cannot be determined. The broad phasing of the barrows can be more usefully considered as

a series of choices. For every action there is an alternative and the sequence may be seen as a series of choices, considered and acted upon in the interests of the community.

A decision was taken to deposit what was once a part of the world of the living into the earth. In the case of Trelystan the community decided that one or more of their dead was to be buried within a structure that transformed and became part of the landscape. This in itself is a significant matter as it seems likely that most of the population during this period were not afforded burial within or beneath a round barrow (Needham 2011). Whilst this disparity is often argued to represent the burials of elites (Clarke et al. 1985; Burgess 2001, 180; Case 2004, 202), or at least “individuals of some distinction” (Needham et al. 2010, 31), and has been critiqued recently (Brück 2004), it should not be assumed that burial beneath a barrow was a privilege. In a society which did not, as a matter of course, bury their dead, it may have been traumatic for families to deviate from the social norm for their loved ones. Burial may have been reserved for specific categories of body or person, or perhaps categories of death which may have been perceived as difficult or disturbing (Fowler 2013, 106).

Similarly, it should not be presumed that the rationale for the round barrows was that they were built solely, or even primarily, to receive bodies. Although the primary deposits at both Trelystan barrows appears to be that of human remains, a small oval pit with burnt sides at the edge of the primary mound of Barrow II and sealed beneath the enlarged mound contained only a deposit of charcoal and a sherd from a Food Vessel Urn. Admittedly, this may represent the remains of a cremation burial from elsewhere, but it is still of interest that care was taken to ensure no human remains were deposited. This practice of deposition of non-human objects, and even barrow building with no identifiable graves or human deposits, is not uncommon. The Upper Ninepence barrow at Walton, Powys (Gibson 1999, 30–3) had no primary burial and at Four Crosses, Powys, two ring ditches had no graves or pits with a third having a posthole towards its centre (Warrilow et al. 1986). Whilst this may indicate that truncation of the mounds removed any secondary burials, it would still suggest the mound was built without the need to cover a primary burial. More convincingly at Raunds, Northamptonshire, where the mounds survived, one barrow had no burials at all and two lacked primary burials, prompting the notion that “the appropriate time to build a barrow may have been determined by factors other than the need to inter a

significant individual” (Healy & Harding 2007, 57). This would certainly seem to be the case in Cornwall where it appears that most barrow sites received no burials at all (Jones 2005, 140). The construction of round barrows therefore is not limited or restricted to the deposition of human remains, they are but one element of a repertoire that is available for selection. Death does not necessarily require a barrow, and a barrow does not necessarily require a death. This statement questions the privileged status or primacy given to the human remains within round barrows and there has indeed been a shift in emphasis with an acknowledgement of the performative acts and processes of construction that gave meaning to these places (Owoc 2007), and the role that materials played (Brittain 2007; Lewis 2007). The concern with materials, substances and practice is particularly relevant when no human remains are present, whether this be in pits below the ground or inserted into the mound, but may also have implications where burials are present (Brück 2004).

Once a decision was taken to commence the building of a barrow, a site would be chosen. Barrows may have been raised in some locales to create an instant history, monumentalising the community’s real or mythical place in the landscape (Garwood 2007, 46) but equally the round barrows may have been placed in parts of the landscape that held meaning to the constructors (Chapter 4). At the micro level, further possibilities arise. Natural phenomena may have provided a foci for some round barrows including trees and tree holes (Healy & Harding 2007, 60) and geological anomalies such as the large ‘boat shaped’ fissure found beneath the mound at Peterchurch, Herefordshire (Marshall 1935). At Trelystan however, it has been suggested that the Neolithic burial and structures, and the later use of the grave cairn to locate two round barrows, are evidence for a continued association with mortuary practices (Thomas 1996, 7). There is certainly some evidence to suggest that the earlier burial was respected as the overlying cairn material appeared to have been raked to ensure it was covered by the primary mound of Barrow II. The Upper Ninepence round barrow was similarly sited over structures and pits associated with Grooved Ware and Impressed Wares (Gibson 1999). Whilst it is unlikely that any trace of the house-like structures remained above ground, the memory or knowledge of these areas significance may have lingered, even if the tangible traces faded. That places associated with pits and depositional practices had a continuing significance is further illustrated by the long sequence of activity at Dyffryn Lane, Powys which saw a sequence beginning with pits containing Peterborough Ware, followed by a stone circle, henge and round barrow (Gibson 2010).

Those buried at Trelystan were cremated, but the cremation in itself is not the final act of dealing with the dead (McKinley 1997). The remains have to be dealt with in some manner and there are subtle differences in all of the burials at Trelystan. The form of the primary burials beneath the mounds at Trelystan points to older traditions and may indicate a transitional period within the borderlands. Knowledge of what has gone before to some extent structures that which comes after, even if the rationale behind such practices changes with time. In line with the rest of Britain at this (Needham 1996), cremation becomes the preferred method of dealing with a body selected for deposition in the borderlands, but aspects of the rite of inhumation were retained at Trelystan through the use of extended pits and accompanying ceramic vessels. Difference was also emphasised through the orientation of the pits - inhumation burials in the region were placed in pits and cists with their long axes north-south (Marshall 1932; Thomas 1965; Woodiwiss 1989; Harrison et al. 1999), a pattern common throughout southern Britain (Shepherd 2012, 274–6) yet at Trelystan they were broadly east-west. But choices are always available; the primary burials were male and female, with the latter accompanied by a pot. It is only with the later burials that some of the remains were interred within pots. The outwardly similar, contemporary satellite burials of Barrow I also exhibit differences - in pit and cairn architecture, number of individuals present, accompaniments, gender and age of the deceased. It was deemed unnecessary for any satellite burials to be placed at Barrow II. The precise nature of these burials may be related to their identity in life, familial or kin group preferences, or they may point to more esoteric factors relating to the function of these depositions. What was important at Trelystan was that as much of the cremated remains of the body was retained as possible (Table 28). The undisturbed burials all returned well above the average weight for cremated remains in comparison to other Welsh Early Bronze Age sites (500-800g - Lynch 1984, 40–1).

Table 28: burial data from Trelystan

Barrow No.	Burial No.	Weight (g)	Sex	Age	Disturbed
Barrow I	burial 1	1210	M	18-20	
Barrow I	burial 2	1516	?M	advanced	
Barrow I	burial 3	31	?	child	Y
Barrow I	burial 4	5904	M & F	>30 & 20	
Barrow I	burial 5	1770	M	Mature	
Barrow I	burial 6	22	?	Mature	Y
Barrow I	burial 7	745	F	>40	Y
Barrow I	?				
Barrow II	burial 1	1305	F	Mature	
Barrow II	burial 2	1610	F	Mature	
Barrow II	burial 3	2380	M	>40	
Barrow II	burial 4	195	?F	Adult	Y

The next consideration of the barrows at Trelystan is concerned with the architectural forms employed. Here, as with the burials, great diversity was exhibited between the two mounds but both were built onto unstripped turf. Many barrow sites are often stripped of their vegetation cover prior to mound building, often to be reincorporated into the mound, but here turf was stripped from directly outside the primary monuments. This deliberate act ensured the integrity of that particular part of the landscape, suspending in time the ground surface, perhaps to minimise disturbance to what had gone before in the case of Barrow II. Once the primary burials had been placed, at some time after these were covered by different materials. Although there is without doubt a proliferation of cairns in the uplands of the west of Britain, simple appeals to expediency can be discounted for choice of materials at Trelystan for the coverings of the primary burials. The stones used for the initial stage of the large cairn of Barrow I were quarried and not simply the result of field clearance, although such stone was used to supplement some of the upper cairn. At Barrow II a mound constructed in three distinct phases was raised, beginning with turves, followed by a stony soil and finally a clayey loam. These choices cannot easily be ascribed to regional, local or even topographic variation, neither can they be related to different burial rites. Rather, they were deliberately chosen to fulfil a specific function. One possible explanation may be attributed to the gender difference of the primary burials. A further explanation may concern the identity of the deceased expressed through the materials used. Brück (2004, 321–2) has stressed the links between people and places through the construction of mounds utilising materials sourced from locations other than the barrow site, giving material form to aspects of personal identity. Whilst

there is no evidence suggesting a distant source for the material in Barrow II, if the female buried there originated from the lowlands where such mounds are more common, an argument could be posited that her kin group retained the right to continue their particular tradition. Identity and bonds were expressed through architecture if not material. Such ties to other kin groups, places and traditions may have also been expressed by the architectural elements that immediately followed the building of the initial cairn of Barrow I. The cairn was covered with a thin turf cap and a ditch was dug, creating what would have appeared to be a typical lowland style ditched bowl barrow. The ditch may also provide evidence of different groups working on the same project. Half of the ditch – from the north-east to the south-west - appears to be of regular width and depth, but that opposite exhibits more irregularity. Perhaps two communities combined to complete this aspect, one more careful or skilled than the other. Ditches are not simply architectural embellishments, they bound and demarcate space, they can restrict or guide movement, but they are also often media for other activities including deposition, burning episodes and they may be refashioned (Nowakowski 2007), yet the ditch here remained pristine until it had silted up and was cut slightly by burial 4. Perhaps the community that required the ditch did not revisit and perform further rituals at this site.

Finally, both barrows differences were subsumed within the larger mounds, outwardly obscuring difference, perhaps to emphasise a unity of traditions or communities. The outer mounds may have signified a form of closure, a new start, but more cremation burials were inserted. It cannot be known if these mounds were raised to accept the new burials, or if the burials were required at some later date. The enlargement of barrows during this period follows the chronological sequence identified by Garwood (2007a), but still, choice is available. At Four Crosses, some contemporary sites were enlarged, but new large single phase mounds were also built (Warrilow et al. 1986).

5.3 Cremated remains: burials or deposits?

The above discussion has demonstrated that each burial and each constructional episode can be seen as a choice from a repertoire. The dead of the Early Bronze Age, or at least some of their remains, did not have to be interred within a barrow. They are also found at other types of monuments such as ring cairns and other variant circles (Lynch 1979;1993), stone and timber circles (Gibson 1994; 2005; Burl 2000, 122–5) and standing stones (Williams 1988). Often the amount of cremated

bone at these sites is small and referred to in terms of 'token' burials or deposits. Partly due to this partial burial, such sites are deemed ceremonial or ritual in nature. Yet round barrows also receive small amounts of cremated bone and this may be more acute in some areas (Jones 2005, 115) but similar deposits are also known within the borderlands at sites such as Holt, Worcestershire (Hunt et al. 1986, 38). At Trelystan, discrete deposits of material, including charcoal and fragmented pottery, were made as well as what appears to be carefully gathered cremated remains. Human bone and cultural material was seemingly treated in the same manner.

The modern distinctions drawn between people and objects is perhaps one of the reasons why the body is privileged in such contexts but this has been questioned in recent literature (Brück 2004; 2006; 2009; Fowler 2004; 2013). These studies are primarily concerned with issues of identity, how the notion of the person is constructed, maintained and retained, even after death. But, just as identity can be argued to be maintained through burial rites, it could also be removed. Cremation is a transformative process, which can operate at many levels including the physical, spiritual and societal (Oestigaard 1999). So cremation can transform not only the physical body but also remove the relations bound up with the body. It can be burnt and crushed, ready to be re-used as a resource for the living, perhaps at significant events in the yearly cycle or in times of crisis. The identity or status of individuals might be irrelevant, inconsequential even. The deceased were selected from all sections of the population, young, old, male and female and perhaps the choice of which was determined by the communities need, rather than the individual's death.

There may have been a right time to build a barrow, perhaps to effect change or as a response to events in the lived world (Buteux & Hughes 1995, 161; Healy & Harding 2007, 57). This may have been societal, cosmological, a response to ecological problems, appeals to religious entities, the range of options is unlimited. The gathering of people to engage in acts of construction that change the landscape and the deposition of a powerful symbolic resource can be seen as responses to external pressures, and as Brück (1995) has demonstrated for the Late Bronze Age, the deployment of human bone can be employed as a particularly potent agent or resource. An outcome was desired, the manipulation of stone and earth, bodies and artefacts all play a symbiotic role in this transformation. As Trelystan has shown though, the round barrow was not a static entity in time but was manipulated through further deposits or structural interventions. This has been interpreted in some

readings as the need to affirm or re-order genealogical ties (Mizoguchi 1993; Barrett 1994, 63–7; Last 2002), but, if we see barrows more as artificial monuments rather than solely as graves as Woodward (2000, 50) suggests, other readings are possible. If the initial acts of construction and deposition was to afford some outcome in the world of the living, then perhaps the desired effect was not achieved or perhaps needed renewing. Human remains and other objects can be added to the barrow, they can be taken away, sometimes repositioned, sometimes apparently discarded as may be seen by the removal of the cremated remains from the southern satellite cairn of Barrow I. Such early removal of burials is not unknown elsewhere; at Chilcompton, Somerset the primary cremation burial was removed, replaced with another, and according to the sequence provided by the radiocarbon dates, reinserted into the later secondary mound (Lewis and Mullin 2012). The geometry of the dead materially and cosmologically alters the barrow.

It would be unwise to suggest unitary explanations for round barrows, especially given the temporal currency of such monuments and the wide variability in burial modes, depositional practices and construction methods, styles and materials. Rather the discussion above seeks to offer one interpretation that addresses some of the problems associated with Early Bronze Age round barrows and cairns and the use of human remains. It demonstrates that round barrows were a medium for communities to actively manipulate their circumstances, selecting certain aspects - artificial mounds and deposition of human remains and other objects - from the wider repertoire available to them. The examination of a single site foregrounds the availability of choice, and allows certain factors, such as regionality, topography and chronology to be mitigated against to some degree.

Chapter 6: A time and a place for round barrows

There can be no definitive statement, no all-encompassing narrative, providing simple, absolute answers to such questions as ‘why build round barrows and why here?’ Such questions are fraught with ambiguities and caveats, appeals to considerations of temporality, regionality and biases of many kinds, yet detailed analysis at different scales can provide some insight. This final chapter will consider the themes, issues and problems raised throughout this thesis, providing an interpretation of round barrows in one region, the Anglo-Welsh borderland. The place of round barrows, both in the landscape and within the routines of life in the Early Bronze Age life will be explored and considered. Rather than placed outside of daily life, both spatially and metaphorically, it will be argued here that round barrows were intrinsic to those routines. The forms the round barrows take and their proximal and topographic relations will be discussed in relation to how they have been considered elsewhere. Communities in the borderlands had access and links to the wider world and were aware of other traditions and practices. Yet differences exist between the borderlands and other areas but it is not the intention of this study to argue for a self-aware regional identity, that has been suggested elsewhere (Mullin 2012). Rather the thesis shows how communities utilised knowledge and traditions and incorporated these into their own practices. In particular it aims to show how choice, rather than prescriptive ideals, influenced how some of the dead were dealt with and incorporated into the world of the living. The examination of the evidence at different scales has allowed for a study that incorporates data in an inclusive manner, concentrating not only on well excavated sites but the mounds in their landscape settings, allowing a different narrative to unfold than that which may have resulted otherwise.

The last two decades have seen an exploration of regionality within prehistoric archaeology (Cummings 2004; Brophy & Barclay 2009; Jones & Kirkham 2011), in part a response to an over-emphasis on certain areas with plentiful upstanding monuments and long histories of antiquarian and archaeological research (Thomas 2004). As such there is a recognition that communities building seemingly similar monuments or using common material culture may not have engaged with them in the same manner (Jones 2011, 3). It has been argued though that some of these studies do not venture much beyond descriptive accounts of difference, which although useful, do not provide explanations for variations in practice (Mullin 2012,

93). The borderlands, has only recently been recognised as a valid region to be considered in accounts of prehistory and synthetic narratives are hampered by the modern political border of England and Wales in a way that a person travelling between these two places is not (Chapter 1). Of the recent volumes published concerning the borderlands in prehistory, one did not consider round barrows (Mullin 2012) and a second has but scant mention of these monuments (Halstead 2005). Additionally the round barrows of Cheshire have been examined by Mullin(2003) and the area below the River Wye by Makepeace (2006) and so the study area has not encroached upon those regions but was chosen to rectify the imbalance both in scope and in geographical terms.

The landscape embodies difference, but there is no hard boundary, rather a merging and blending. Topographically it marks the transition from the lowlands of England to the highlands of Wales but significant uplands such as the Shropshire Hills and the outliers of the Cleve Hills extend well into the east. Conversely the broad river valley of the Upper Severn winds into the heart of Wales and the Walton Basin appears as a lowland oasis, ringed by hills. Thus, when considered as a topographic entity, the borderland is different to that which lies east and west. This difference has also been identified in the archaeological signature and seems to have been evident since the Neolithic (Mullin 2011; 2012). A peculiarity of this in the Early Bronze Age would appear to be the lack of burnt mounds; radiocarbon dates suggest an origin in the west and arriving much later in the east but there is very little evidence for their uptake in the region between (Chapter 2). Mullin (2011, 9) does not ascribe a homogenous cultural area to the borderlands, stressing that different communities would have taken the material and monumental aspects of practice from different areas as they saw fit. Rather he suggests that it was the locality of the region itself, and its specific qualities of landscape that was responsible for fostering a sense of difference, both materially and conceptually. It has been suggested too that the borderlands have closer ties to the south of England than with the rest of Wales (Lynch 2000, 138). Certainly this may be glimpsed on occasion, such as the well-furnished early Beaker burial at Wellington Quarry, Herefordshire (Harrison et al. 1999) which has parallels with Southern England (Fitzpatrick 2011, 209, Table 35), but such associations are likely due to proximity and will not be the same along the length of the border. This in effect rather strengthens Mullin's implication of piecemeal appropriation - it should come as no surprise that some influences will be more prevalent at certain locations. Yet the effect of regional archaeologists working in

English landscapes has frequently led to burials, monuments and sites being described in terms of 'Wessex' typologies in an attempt to fit into the 'bigger picture' (Jones & Kirkham 2011, 2) when sometimes it may be more appropriate to look to the west rather than the south.

The examination of the various purported 'fancy' or 'Wessex' type barrows demonstrates this well (Chapter 3). The Kempsey 'disc barrows' have no evidence for internal mounds and appear more akin to ring cairns whilst Shooting Box on Long Mynd has a bank but no ditch. There are ring cairns on Titterstone Clee Hill - approximately half way between these two locations - and other mounds which appear to be ring cairns with internal mounds such as the examples on Stapeley Hill, Shropshire and the Begwyns, Herefordshire, which point not only to influences from the west but to a melding of traditions. In the case of Kempsey and Shooting Box the construction of an encircling bank, built of earth rather than stone, may be construed as a borderlands variant of the ring cairn with the form of the western tradition and the material preference of the east. It would appear that architectural traditions from both east and west of the area intermingled at the borders but communities did not just appropriate forms and practice wholesale from elsewhere but manipulated these traditions for their own purposes. The placement of ring cairns to the east of the study area for example has notable topographic dissimilarities to those elsewhere in Wales (Ward 1988a; 1988b). Perhaps this then is the signature, not an outright difference but a merging, of people, place and practice.

The macro scale examination of round barrows has elicited useful information on the distributions and topographic ranges of round barrows and provided some explanation for this (Chapter 3). The study area is almost equally divided between England and Wales but there appeared to an imbalance in the number of sites represented with only a third of the sites from England. There is also disparity in the number of extant and destroyed sites (assuming the ring ditches are representative of Early Bronze Age site) with the majority of ring ditches located to the east. The examination of altitudinal preference has shown that round barrows occur at all levels of topographic relief but are more likely to survive when located in the uplands. This distribution tallies with a previous study which encompassed the whole of Wales (Roese 1982). Factors relating to processes of destruction and obscuration were examined and, unsurprisingly perhaps, it is likely that modern agriculture is responsible for the destruction of a large number of barrow sites on the English side

of the border. The number of cropmark sites is roughly equal to that of extant sites, and that number is largely dependent on the fortuitous circumstances of the riverine distributions of some round barrows on gravel terraces conducive to cropmark formation. It is entirely possible then, given what is known of the distribution of extant round barrows to the west that a similar density of round barrows may be found in the rolling landscapes away from the rivers. It is certainly feasible that the number of sites to the east could double. For future research it would be possible to check the veracity of this claim with detailed study of lidar data to detect low mounds and the systematic study of field names and Anglo-Saxon charters in those areas where this has not been attempted. Such an approach proved worthwhile as demonstrated by Leslie Grinsell for those areas where he compiled his barrow lists. The value of field names has been highlighted by the application of this method to fill in the gap between the upland and lowland distribution of sites at the Berwyns. A detailed analysis of other site types, such as mottes, may also be beneficial in attempting to further enhance the record.

A further aspect of the macro scale survey entailed an overview of barrow forms (Chapter 3). Although it may be considered questionable as to whether much useful information can be gleaned from this, particularly when the form of the barrow that survives today represents possibly only the final act of manipulation, the study has provided some insight and clarification on certain points. The consideration of the validity of ascribing Wessex region typologies has been mentioned above and in many cases such assignments are likely erroneous or a misreading of the evidence. However, distinctive constructional features that can be identified by fieldworkers can still provide data with which to aid interpretation by analogy. The very different constructional biographies of the Trelystan barrows for example may well be mirrored elsewhere. Trelystan had one barrow which was encircled by a ditch and one without and this is mirrored at Robin Hood's Butts on the Long Mynd in a similar topographic setting. The use of ditches in upland areas has been argued to represent choice rather than the pragmatic use of excavated ditch material to construct a mound. Distinct barrow forms and features have also been recognised at certain topographic locales. On some long ridges, the point at which the ridge breaks slope may be marked by barrows, often in pairs or three's with at least one barrow encircled by a ditch. This was evident at the northern end of the Long Mynd, the southern end of Banc Gorddwr and the eastern end of the Kerry Ridgeway. These locales may have been considered transitional and this may be echoed in the way the landscape was

perceived, marking not only the passage from one landform to another but the beginning or ending of journeys.

It is clear from the above discussion that round barrows can be found in all topographic locations and as such it would be difficult, if not futile, to suggest any overriding rationale. As such it is necessary to approach problems of placement at a greater scale and to this end it was decided to investigate the nature of clustering of round barrows (Chapter 4). The majority of round barrows are relatively isolated, and where close grouping appears it is often restricted to two or three monuments. Clusters of round barrows were identified using GIS density analysis and the nature of this clustering was examined through a series of fieldwork based cases studies. The fieldwork analysed the forms of barrows, their precise topographic and spatial relations, visual relationships to the barrows within the cluster and to other barrows, monuments and the wider landscape. An attempt was made to understand whether these clusters might be considered groupings (analogous to the cemetery criteria codified by Fleming) and if so how this might be explained.

It is clear from other research that there is no overall design that can explain the variety of patterning seen and so each cluster must be approached on its own terms. In some studies this is answered by reference to the proximity and significance of earlier monumentality; henges and Stonehenge (Exon et al. 2000) being the most obvious examples but cursus monuments also (Bradley & Chambers 1988). The role of memory, either real or imagined, may have played a part in constructing these relationships (Rogers 2013) or there may have been underlying cosmological principles pertaining to circularity (Woodward & Woodward 1996). Yet a principal feature of the English Midlands and the borderlands during the Late Neolithic has been identified as the relative paucity of the standard repertoire of Neolithic monumentality (Mullin 2012, 89). Rather, there has been an acknowledgement that ceremonial or ritual activity likely took place on a more intimate level, seen through the widespread practice of digging pits and depositing cultural material (Jackson 2007; Ray 2007, 71–2). There are however some locations within the study area, such as the Walton Basin or the Upper Severn Valley, where earlier monumentality is evident although such monumental landscapes are relatively rare, particularly for the English side of the border. Whilst these landscapes certainly attracted round barrows, it should not necessarily be assumed that proximity relates to relationships or that such monuments dictated the placement of later round barrows. There is

certainly some clustering of round barrows and ring ditches at the Sarn-y-bryn-caled cursus complex (Gibson 1994) and around the Dyffryn Lane Henge (Gibson 2010) for example, but an examination of the Walton Basin landscape showed no particular concern for the earlier monuments. Instead it appears that it was of more importance for round barrows to be placed so as to overlook, or line, the stream channels. This dispersed linearity, following watercourses, is a pattern seen at Bromfield, a site with no early monuments, but also at Sarn-y-bryn-caled, although the relationship to the cursus and timber circle there remains to be explored. This does not necessarily mean that the earlier sites were of no consequence; they were most likely long lived features of the landscape, even as their banks slumped and ditches were filled, but their presence was still known. They would need to be incorporated into the present (Bradley 2002) but precisely how this occurred is unknown.

The majority of the clusters within the borderlands do not appear to have been sited with regard to earlier monuments and so other explanations must be explored. In the absence of excavation other methods of dealing with data must be pursued and this has led to a rise in the interest of the visual relationships of monuments. This is partly due to the phenomenological methodology employed and championed by Tilley (2004) but also the use of Geographic Information Systems (Chapman 2003; 2006; Exon et al. 2000; Lake & Woodman 2003; Llobera 2007) which allow large bodies of spatial data to be analysed.

The detailed fieldwork and analysis of some of the clusters in the borderlands has shown that intervisibility did not appear to be a structuring principle in many of these landscapes. The notable exception to this was the Corndon cluster where it appeared a deliberate attempt was made to enhance this aspect of their placement. At many of the other clusters, intervisibility could have been improved by the utilisation of local summits, but a consistent avoidance was maintained. Contrary to the notion of round barrow groupings representing the extent of distinct 'home' territories, it may be that parts of the landscape were utilised by more than one community and that in some instances round barrows were used to denote or proclaim rights of usage, but it should be emphasised that this does not equate to territoriality. Territories may be seen as land, its resources and the modifications made to and upon it, whilst territoriality is concerned with influence, control and differential access (Zedeno 2008, 211). Round barrows placed at these locations, yet maintaining visual and spatial distance, might be explained as the material manifestation of different communities'

usage of the land and its resources. This was suggested for a number of different locations and topographic settings. At both Radnor Forest and the Begwyns, distinct hills populated by barrows that maintained a degree of spatial and visual separation, it was suggested that these were landscapes utilised by different groups. At both of these locations it was suggested that the presence of distinct and morphologically different monuments may have been the arenas at which relationships were negotiated to maintain a co-presence.

Where round barrows clusters display elements of linearity, this is often explained in terms of genealogical principles but such tight groupings are extremely rare within the borderlands. Watson (2001, 213) noticed that the round barrows further out from henge monuments in Wiltshire were influenced by routes of movement rather than the principles of circularity that were evident closer to the earlier monuments and a similar pattern of dispersed linearity was identified at the Long Mynd and Banc Gorddwr. Again restricted intervisibility was a notable feature even though it could have been maintained more readily if required. These purported routeways have no nearby monuments and so it is unlikely they were utilised to mark ceremonial passages but may instead have served as sections of long-distance networks or merely the expedient routes along ridges of upland utilised as grazing areas. It is possible then that what may sometimes be identified as discrete clusters could in fact be indicative of multiple communities utilising a landscape but emphasising and maintaining their identity through visual and spatial separation. Within these clusters small groupings of round barrows may have been associated with different communities.

Some researchers have emphasised the liminal nature of round barrows in landscapes. This has been argued for in Wiltshire where round barrows were used to emphasise a threshold between the landscape of monuments and the wider world (Watson 2001, 213). This would suggest landscapes were reserved in some manner or perceived differently (Harding 2013, 61). Whilst not arguing for ritual landscapes, or landscapes of the dead for the borderlands, there are some indications that round barrows may mark certain defining points in the landscape. This may be topographic and symbolic in the case of the placement of barrows at cols for example, but in the absence of distinct topographical features the extreme of a barrow distribution may be marked by utilising distinctive barrow forms or paired barrows in the case of the Walton Basin. Certain landscapes did attract more tightly focused clusters and

groupings but it has been argued here that these might have occurred due to the presence of desirable materials such as stone and gold, or rich grazing pastures. Rather than seeing clusters of round barrows as forming a ritual or ceremonial landscape it is as likely that they were constructed at locations which were embedded within daily life, including the movement of animals or the extraction and exploitation of materials and resources. The density of barrows at the northern end of the Banc Gorddwr cluster was likely the result of three different routeways converging and three rivers rising, perhaps signalling a distinctive and easily recognised locale. Clusters also appear at river confluences, perhaps indicative of places where communities gathered at certain times and such places as described above may be considered nodal points in wider networks. Just as Watson (2001, 208) suggests that round barrows influenced the ways in which people experienced the landscape around them, it is also true that it was peoples use and experience of the landscape that led them to build round barrows where they did.

The review of the theoretical problem of settlement is discussed in some detail (Chapter 2) to illustrate one of the principal problems of dealing with round barrows; that they are frequently set apart from discussions of settlement activity, primarily because of the presence of human remains. Yet human remains associated with domestic activity is uncontroversial for later periods characterised by more recognisable domestic architecture (Brück 1995). Settlement is where people do things for a time longer than a brief pause and where ritualistic and mundane activities are intertwined and inseparable (Buteux & Hughes 1995; Brück & Goodman 1999; Pollard 1999). The stake circles at Trelystan and Four Crosses were interpreted as constructional devices to retain turf, but it has been suggested that such settings may have been conceived as copies of domestic buildings (Bradley 2012, 179). It is entirely feasible that this could be extended to suggest that 'domestic' activities including the building of a shelter could have taken place as a prelude to some of the depositional and constructional phases of the barrow. Round barrows should not be taken out of the 'domestic' sphere, they are part of it. They do not represent landscapes of the dead, but interventions into the world of the living at those places the living inhabit.

The evidence outlined in Chapter 2 has shown little evidence for a population rooted into its landscape through substantial domestic architecture of a type with which we are familiar. This is a characteristic not restricted to the borderlands, as a

comprehensive survey of dated roundhouses in Wales has confirmed the almost complete lack of these structures in the Early Bronze Age, noting instead that occupation practices were instead typified by less substantial structures of which only the occasional hearth or pit now survives (Ghey et al. 2007). Recognised as something other than the everyday detritus of domestic waste or storage pits it has been suggested that pit deposits may have acted as means of commemorating particular events or periods of occupation, or that people went to certain places to perform acts of which pit digging was a part (Thomas 1999, 64–88). In either case it can be argued that the digging of pits and deposition of material within them brought meaning to a locality and fixed a connection between people and place (ibid. 87). The relationship between round barrows and earlier activity including pits was explored at various sites. Where modern excavation has taken place it is clear that some barrows were indeed built upon or next to sites witnessing previous acts of pit digging and deposition. At Meole Brace, Shropshire, a number of pits within 10m of a ring ditch contained sherds of Impressed Ware and possible Grooved Ware (Hughes et al. 1995) and Neolithic pottery was also found in a pit and ditches at nearby Sharpstones Hill (Barker et al. 1991). A shallow depression within the perimeter of Barrow B15 at Bromfield, described by the excavator as an ‘occupation hollow’ contained sherds from five different Beaker vessels and fragments from seven Beaker vessels were also recovered from a pit at Four Crosses, Powys. Barrows and ring ditches at Holt, Worcestershire had pits which may have been for a variety of purposes including some with no apparent deposits. The re-use of these places may of course be coincidental but an argument for a persistence of memory, either through marking in some manner or repeated actions (e.g. storytelling or repeated clearance of vegetation from favourable or significant locales) can be entertained. That connections may indeed be long lasting and widespread was highlighted by Cleal (1999, 6) reporting 48% of Grooved Ware in sites in Wiltshire were under barrows or redeposited in the mounds and a further 29% were within 200 metres of a barrow, giving a connection with barrow sites of 77%. Thomas (1999, 72–3) has argued that pit digging and the deposition of objects and substances may have been more important than the activities (e.g. feasts, celebrations) that generated the material concerned. Pit digging becomes less a means of committing an event to social memory and more of an event itself, and may have been used to exert an influence on the place (ibid. 87). These activities however did not take place away from settlement, they were part of the activities of a mobile population.

Thomas notes the evolution of depositional practices during the Neolithic and the decline of pit digging during the late third millennium (ibid. 87-8), in effect concomitant with the rise of round barrows as focal points for the deposition of ceramic objects amongst other items. He distinguishes pits from the other ways that material can be deposited not so much as a different set of underlying principles but by their locations and assemblages, yet the correlation of early pits and round barrows may suggest otherwise. Deposition of objects did take place away from the pits and barrows, particularly with regard to metalwork in the borderlands (Chapter 2), but the ceramics of the Early Bronze Age less so and there are few finds of Collared Urns and Food Vessels outside the context of barrows. The use of objects to exert influence was no longer the preserve of pits but barrows were now used too, often in the same places as before. Pits are dug into the ground to receive deposits *before* the mound is raised. These deposits may include various amounts of human bone, whole or fragmented pots and whole or fragmented objects of stone, metal or organic material along with soils and charcoal. Pits are dug into mounds to receive these materials after the mound is raised. The raising of the ground surface through the construction of the mound should not negate the intention of digging a pit into the earth.

It was argued that the primary rationale for building a round barrow in the borderlands may not have been to commemorate a significant individual or individuals. There is most likely not one simple explanation that can encompass the many considerations and actions that were required to make material, in such a manner, the concerns of communities across Britain during the Early Bronze Age. Rather it was suggested that round barrows may better be viewed as processes, acts of construction and manipulation, in places of meaning that sometimes required the deposition or inclusion of various substances, materials and resources to effect a change within the world. At certain times and places the death of an individual may have triggered the building of a barrow, at other times and places other events, perhaps related to crises or celebrations triggered the construction. Round barrows are physical interventions into a landscape but they are also metaphysical interventions. There was no rigid template to be followed however beyond the principle of circularity, a concept seemingly enmeshed within the psyche from the Late Neolithic onwards (Bradley 2012). Constructional, depositional and material choices may have been pragmatic at times, but this was not always so. Different groups will do different things at different times, but the analysis of Trelystan has demonstrated that regionality and chronology cannot be used to account for all differences.

The problem of why build a barrow has long perplexed pre-historians, with many interpretations following trends in the wider academic world. The commonality of many of these approaches however is the foregrounding of the body and so the attribution of these monuments as primarily funerary in nature is readily explicable. It is perhaps easier to countenance arguments for identity, status and rank with the earlier inhumation burials of the period, but the ascendancy of the rite of cremation perhaps enabled more readily the use of the body as a resource. The use of partial cremated bodies may suggest a dispersal at different nodes, some placed in a barrow, some distributed to relatives or the wider kin group. It is of interest that small amounts of bone placed at morphologically different sites to barrows are often considered as ritual deposits not pertaining to burial but to ceremony. The introduction of cremation allowed bodies to be deposited in circumstances similar to other practices that had a long currency.

6.1 Further research

Although it has been possible to construct an interpretation for the rationale of round barrow construction and placement, there are other avenues which could have been explored. Some were not, due to the scope of the study, others could not be followed due to financial restraints. The majority of the excavations at round barrows were conducted by antiquarians or in the pre-modern era. Source material is lacking for most of the excavated barrows but where such material survives it would be advantageous to obtain new samples for radiocarbon dating to allow for the fine-grained temporal analysis now being conducted elsewhere (Garrow et al. 2014).

An aspect of the signature of some round barrow groupings in the borderlands deserving of closer attention is that of round barrow pairs, as exemplified by Trelystan. Some are so closely spaced as to be near contiguous, such as those at Trelystan and Rhos Crug, near Beacon Hill in Radnorshire, others are more widely spaced, separated by up to 100m or so, but still clearly recognised as such by their isolation from other round barrows. A commonality of such pairs is that they usually exhibit morphological differences, most obviously in size, which upon excavation reveal internal complexity. It is unlikely given the frequency of dissimilar pairs that the less complex barrow is simply unfinished or at a less developed phase. There also appears to be some preference in topographic siting, perhaps signifying transitional

zones in a landscape although this is not universal. Attention has been drawn elsewhere to the phenomena of broadly contemporary paired monuments in the form of standing stones (Williams 1988, 12). Often associated with deposits including human remains, here too an asymmetry in form has been noted. Described in terms of masculine and feminine symbols, the pair may consist of a larger, square topped stone with the other being slighter and often tapering, although there are variations. This practice of differential duality may be extended to include the pairing of large and small urns, vessels and accessory cups that accompany some burials. Perhaps the dual rites of inhumation and cremation within the same barrow, sometimes even within the same pit, are an aspect of the same phenomenon. To stretch the concept further we can recall how the pair of Late Neolithic structures at Trelystan were similar, yet the pits dug into the ground contained deposited material that was different between the structures. We are aware that certain themes and conceptual notions permeated the consciousness and structured the activities and rituals of late prehistoric peoples, such as circularity in monuments, houses and art (Bradley 2012). Perhaps then, the pairing of similar but subtly different things also held some significance, to be invoked as circumstances demanded.

6.2 Final words

The study has attempted to place round barrows back into the world of the living rather than the world of the dead. As others have noted it is perhaps futile to expect discrete homesteads, substantial houses and fields (Chapter 2), but the traces of everyday life are all around the Early Bronze Age landscape of the borderlands in the form of round barrows and cairns. Even in this one region there is unlikely to be a single rationale for the isolated barrows and the clusters and groupings, but they were more than monuments to the dead, if they ever were. They were media with which to interact with this world, the otherworld and with other people. In some ways round barrows can be seen to continue a tradition with roots firmly planted in the late Neolithic. This tradition is not that of burial, or even the raising of round mounds to cover the dead. Recent work by Healy (2012, 148–52) on radiocarbon dated inhumed skeletal remains suggests an interval of between 170-510 years separating Middle and Late Neolithic inhumation burials. Similarly a further hiatus, estimated at 200-420 years was noted between the appearance of Beaker burials and that of other Early Bronze Age inhumations lacking Beaker associated artefacts. Healy argues then that there was no surviving insular tradition of individual inhumation. What does appear to

be continuous is the deposition of objects, stone, ceramic, charcoal, metalwork and bone.

The round barrow is not an end in itself. It is a conduit through which social practices are enabled and enacted and was never a static, mute part of the landscape. From the moment of conception and construction, the mound accreted through the coalescence of soils, stone, bone, charcoal and minerals. The mound would change, being covered by vegetation, receiving new deposits, old ones removed, new mounds were added to the old mounds, more vegetation accumulated, the earth finally reclaiming its own.

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Appendix 1

Borderlands Barrow Project

Field Recording Form

Name		Alternative Name(s)		SMR	
HER Grid Ref		Easting		Northing	
□□		□□ □□ □□		□□□□ □□	
Date Visited:					
Own Grid Ref		Easting		Northing	
□□		□□ □□ □□		□□□□ □□	
Survey Type:					
Grid ref source			Grid reference location (eg. Centre of site)		
Type of Site					
Barrow <input type="checkbox"/>		Cairn <input type="checkbox"/>		Barrow/Cairn <input type="checkbox"/>	
Stone Circle <input type="checkbox"/>		Mound <input type="checkbox"/>			
Ring Cairn <input type="checkbox"/>		Kerb Circle <input type="checkbox"/>		Stone <input type="checkbox"/>	
Crop Mark <input type="checkbox"/>		Earthwork <input type="checkbox"/>			
Photo No	From	Looking to		Direction	
HER Description:					

Field Sketch: Plan, Mound Shape

Site Description

Location: Plateau Slope Ridge Summit Col Valley Head Terrace

Valley Bottom Watershed Aspect Cemetery type: Complex Isolated Cemetery Pair

Details

Building Materials:

Form:

Mound Covering:

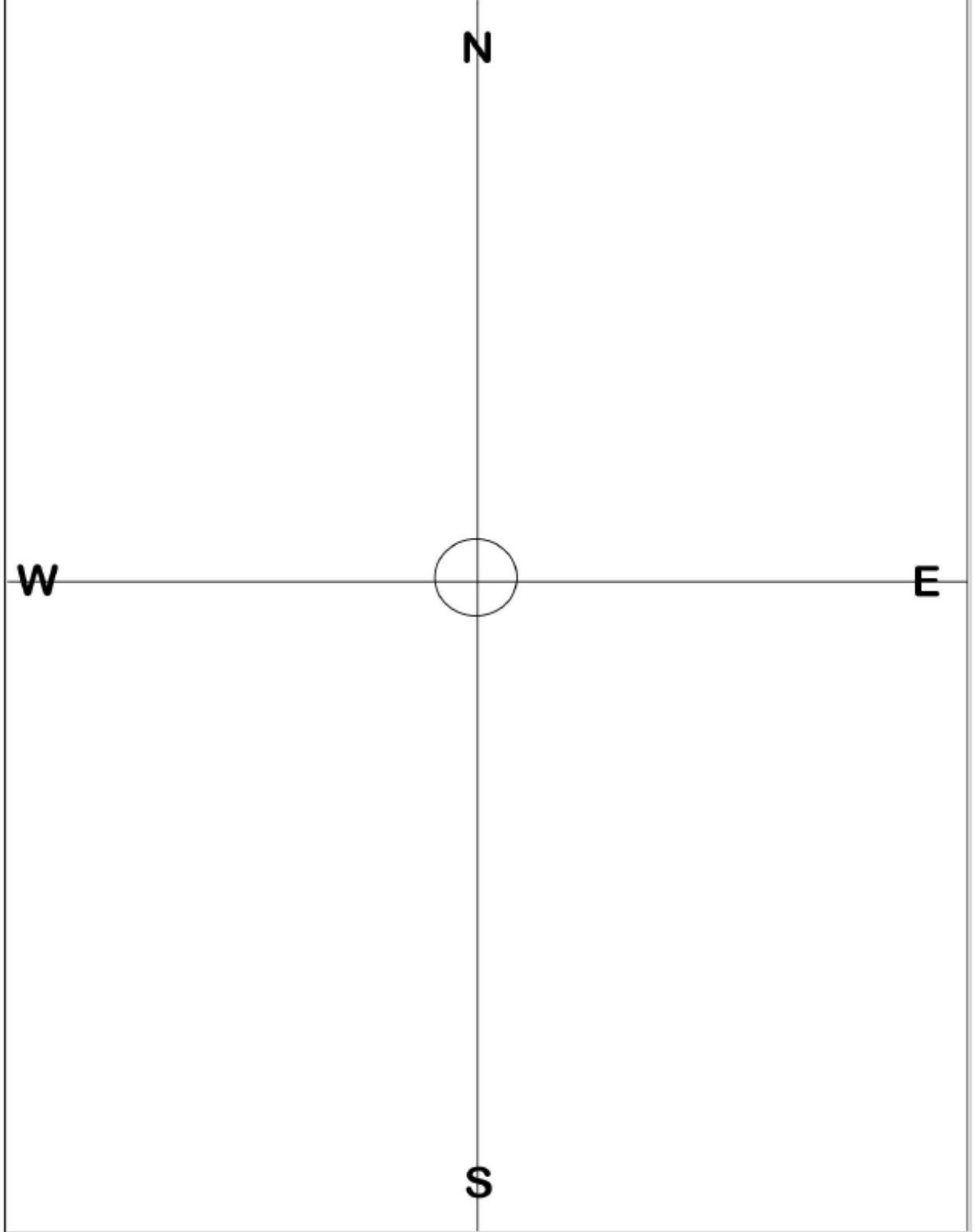
Features:

Ditch Bank Berm Cist Orthostat

Dimensions: Diameter Height

Further Information

Plan of features and relationships (natural and cultural)



Appendix 2

The CD attached to the thesis contains two files.

The file *Borderland Sites* contains details of round barrow and related sites in the study area. An explanation of the headings and attributes is provided below. The file *Excavated Site References* details the references for all sites which have some form of record.

Borderland Sites Heading Descriptions

PRN

Site number as recorded by the relevant county HER. In some instances the same site number may be in use for different counties. Additionally some records containing multiple monuments have been split but retain the original PRN to avoid confusion.

Name

Name as given on the county HER.

Name

Site name as recorded by the HER. In many instances summary descriptions are used, particularly where there is no traditional name.

HER Type

Monument classification as recorded by the county HER

Type NJ Monument Type

Broad monument classification used for this study. This served to define very broad classes of monuments, primarily as a way of distinguishing mounded structures, such as barrows and cairns, from other burial sites, including uncovered cists and those with no associated structures such as burials. Further detail as to constructional and morphological elements is provided in other fields.

All of the circular mounded monuments regardless of form or construction were labelled as round barrows and defined by the level of confidence attributed to them. Degrees of confidence in the attribution of the site as a round barrow are described by the suffixes probable, possible and doubtful as previously outlined. Where it has been shown categorically that the record for the barrow is erroneous, these have been removed from the database.

The categories are listed thus:

- Round barrow (probable)
- Round barrow (possible)
- Round barrow (doubtful)
- Ring ditch
- Ring ditch group

- Cist
- Cist (possible)
- Cist (doubtful)
- Cist – burial
- Burial
- Burial (possible)
- Cremation cemetery

Description

Free text as provided by the HER and supplemented for this study by the author

Source

Detail of the origin of the site record:

- Earthwork – The site was an extant earthwork visible at the last known visit as recorded by the HER or by the author
- Cropmark – The site is visible as identified by cropmark or soilmarks from aerial photographs and / or field visits
- Document – the site is now only known from documentary sources. This includes sites lost or destroyed. The detail varies, some sites only being known to modern researchers through historical texts, others are the result of destruction through modern excavation.

Location confidence

The degree of confidence in the location of a site, particularly with regard to those non-extant sites identified by documentary sources. This may be the result of descriptive vagueness, misidentification or human error in recording or transcribing grid references.

- High - good
- Medium - minor elements of doubt
- Low - major elements of doubt

Mound shape

A basic categorisation of the morphological characteristics of the monument where one is given by either the HER, other sources or by the author's fieldwork. These names are not proscriptive but are a general indicator where a fieldworker has made some attempt to distinguish typologically from the amorphous mounds usually described as being bowl barrows. In many cases there appears to have been disturbance of some form, including digging through the top of the mound. However this is not always the case and other causes are noted such as animal disturbance, agricultural regimes and the denudation processes of erosion. In essence it is perhaps most useful for distinguishing those monuments which are immediately apparent to differ somewhat from the norm.

Types include:

- Undefined – constitutes the largest group. This category could generally be presumed to contain many Bowl Barrows but as described above, this can never be assumed so rather than enforce a typology upon a mound it is left as undefined. This grouping also encompasses those cairns which do not confirm to what Lynch terms variant circles.
- Flat top – the monument has a distinctive flattened profile which may be an original design or a result of later disturbance
- Disc – as defined by Grinsell (1953)
- Bell – as defined by Grinsell (1953)
- Pond – as defined by Grinsell (1953)
- Ring Cairn – as defined by Lynch (1979)
- Kerb Cairn – as defined by Lynch (1979)
- Platform – as defined by Lynch (1979)

Monument form

Describes the nature of the surviving monument

- Mound - a mound covered by vegetation, may have some stone visible
- Cairn - the main building material appears to be stone, little vegetation cover
- Cist – a cist with no associated mound
- Unknown - not visited or not documented, particularly where monuments have been destroyed and no record of their form survives. This section includes ring ditches where the presence of a mound or cairn is not documented or known.

Maximum diameter

The diameter recorded here is the last known measurement from a reliable source. A diameter assumes that the subject being measured is circular. This is not always the case, partly due to ploughing and other destructive and erosive processes and only maximum diameters are recorded here. All imperial measurements have been converted to metric. In addition early fieldworkers used paces to measure circumference. In these cases approximate diameters have been calculated by converting the paces to metres and the diameters calculated from the circumference. Of the 1608 records in the database 600 had no recorded diameter associated with the record.

Maximum height

The height of the mound/cairn as recorded by the last reliable fieldworker.

Dimension source

Details the source of the dimensions provided for diameter and height.

- Document – This entry refers to information from documented sources such as compiled by the HER's or from other sources such as excavation reports or historical texts

- MUMP – It was apparent that not all of the dimensions of the ring ditches identified during the Marches Uplands Project survey (MUMP) were entered into the HER records. Where this was the case the measurements were taken from the scanned overlays of aerial photographs and measured using the measure tool in the GIS. These measurements should be considered approximate.
- Survey – Indicates the measurements were taken from the author's own survey

Altitude

Altitudes are cited as Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Problems and inconsistencies in the supplied altitudinal data, with errors of up to 50m in some cases necessitated a check of all the data using Ordnance Survey 1:25000 mapping within the GIS.

Siting

Descriptions of site location as entered on the HER was sporadic and in many cases particularistic. The Welsh data was more useful than that of the English counties, where little regard has been paid to topographic information. Where applicable the Welsh descriptions have been retained or assimilated into the broader categories. A broad value was assigned to each site and was obtained either from the HER record or from Ordnance Survey mapping. The scale of the task means that precise topographical descriptions could not be obtained for every site and so broad definitions are used instead. It is recognised that this is rather coarse but detailed topographical descriptions are provided in later case studies. This macro scale analysis was intended to identify sites for further, more detailed analysis.

- River valley – sited on the floor of a river valley
- Low valley slope – the lower slopes of generally broad valleys
- High valley head – the upper reaches or head of a valley
- Hilltop – sited on or near the highest point of a given hill
- Knoll – sited on a localised highspot
- Col – an area of flatter ground between two higher areas or hilltops
- Lowland – an area of low-lying, generally flat ground
- Plateau – a relatively broad flat expanse of upland terrain
- Ridge – sited on a linear stretch of land with downward slopes on both sides
- River confluence – sited close to a confluence of rivers
- Summit – sited on the highest point of a distinctive hill or mountain top
- Shoulder edge – defines a site which occupies a position at the edge of a steep slope, cliff or ridge.

Monument features

This section describes those visible features recorded by fieldworkers. There is no distinction between features that were once visible and are no longer so.

- Ditch

- Bank
- Entrance
- Pit
- Stake circle
- Berm
- Kerb
- Cist

Cemetery type

This section is a broad simple analysis of probable cemetery integrity based upon visual analysis of distributions of sites overlaid on OS mapping. It will be further refined by more detailed GIS analysis utilising 'nearest neighbour' and cluster analysis. The intention here is to identify possible barrow groupings and cemeteries.

Excavation

Here the date of excavation (or publication) is recorded. The term excavation is loosely applied and encompasses both professional, amateur and antiquarian excavations as well as more accidental and incidental discoveries made during the course of such activities as road building and agricultural practices.

County

Provides the current and previous administrative county names

Condition

This information is derived from the HER records and reflects the state of preservation recorded by the last fieldworker

NGR

National Grid Reference

X and Y

Co-ordinates of the site

Alt name

Alternative name(s) of the site

Grinsell

Designation given by Grinsell for Herefordshire Barrows

Other ID

Other identifications, primarily relating to statutory designations